

2006 farm output weaker than expected due to typhoons

Mating game: How woman sizes up man?



PARIS—A LONELY man desperate to find a girlfriend might be well advised to hire a few women to smile at him—and let female copycat genes run their course.

British psychologists
MATING/A6

Ex-Sol Gen Frank Chavez says he filed 10 documents at Ombudsman to prove Perez guilty of plunder

Car bombs hit university in Baghdad; 65 students killed

Democratic Party star Barack Obama bares bid to be 1st black US president



Indon exec in Asean summit accused of graft

AN OFFICIAL, WHO ACCOMPANIED Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono to the 12th Asean summit in Cebu last week, allegedly tried to get hotel managers to mark up their expenses and split the profits, The Jakarta Post reported yesterday.

The state secretariat staffer allegedly approached the management of the Shangri-La's Mactan Island Resort to increase the listed price
INDON/A8

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

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★★

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Killing of top Abu confirmed

US help cited in Sulaiman's death

By Dona Pazzibugan

ABU SULAIMAN, A SENIOR LEADER OF THE EXTREMIST group Abu Sayyaf and alleged mastermind of high-profile kidnappings and deadly bomb attacks in Mindanao, has met his end in a Sulu jungle, the Armed Forces announced yesterday.

Sulaiman, whose real name was Jinal Antel Sali, was killed by elite Army troops in Talipao, Sulu, on Tuesday but officials only confirmed it yesterday.

They said he was the brains behind the 2001 Dos Palmas kidnapping, the 2004 SuperFerry 14 bombing and the 2005 Valentine's Day bomb attacks.

"We are very elated by this accomplishment. I would personally rank him as somebody higher than [Abu Sayyaf chieftain] Khadaffy Janjalani" in the group's hierarchy, AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. said at a news conference in Camp Aguinaldo.

Esperon said that when Abu Sayyaf founder Abdurajak Janjalani was killed in Basilan in 1999, the likes of Sulaiman and Isnilon Hapilon took command before Janjalani's younger brother Khadaffy was acknowledged as the new leader.

KILLING/A4



DOUBLE WHAMMY

In less than a month, Chin-Chin Gutierrez, actress, model and environmentalist, lost her ancestral home and all her belongings in a fire on Dec. 20. On Wednesday, at the Loyola Memorial Park, she buries her mother, Cecilia Arnaldo-Gutierrez, herself an artist, who succumbed to diabetes on Jan. 12. (Story in Metro, Page A18)

RAFFY LERMA

SAVED BY THE BELL

TRO aborts police assault on Iloilo capitol

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.,
Carla P. Gomez and Felipe Celino
Inquirer Visayas

THE COURT OF APPEALS IN CEBU CITY issued a 60-day temporary restraining order on the enforcement of the dismissal order against Iloilo Gov. Niel Tupas Sr.

The two-page order released by the Court of Appeals in Cebu City at 4:30 p.m. barred the Office of the Ombudsman, Department of Interior and Local Government, and other government agencies from removing Tupas, 74, from office during the period.

The order signed by Associate Justices Francisco Acosta, Agustin Dizon and Isaias Dicanan was issued to "preserve the status quo" and to "defend the rights" of

the petitioners.

The much-awaited copy was received by the office of the governor minutes after hundreds of fully armed policemen assaulted the provincial capitol.

The assault came before the lapse of the 48-hour deadline set by Interior Secretary Renaldo Puno for dismissed and suspended local executives to leave their respective offices. The deadline lapses at noon today.

The Ombudsman dismissed Tupas, along with Mayor Wenceslao "Peewee" Trinidad of Pasay City, Mayor Antonio Prospero Esquivel of Jaen, Nueva Ecija, and several other local executives, for his alleged involvement in graft.

"Justice will always prevail," a teary-eyed and jubilant Tupas repeatedly

TRO/A6

Gringo not among Erap's nine 'sure' Senate bets

By TJ Burgonio

IT'S OFFICIAL. FORMER SEN. GREGORIO "Gringo" Honasan is out of the senatorial slate of the United Opposition-led coalition.

The camp of the UNO leader, former President Joseph Estrada, yesterday released a partial list of nine "sure" candidates, including opposition stalwarts, and three other possible candidates, but without Honasan's name on it.

The coalition's ad hoc executive committee, composed of Estrada and leaders of the other parties, dropped Honasan from the slate after weighing the pros and cons of his candidacy.

Those in the top five of the list drawn up by UNO, Nacionalista Party and the Liberal Party wing of Sen. Franklin Drilon, were Senate President Manuel Villar Jr. and Sen. Panfilo Lacson; former Senators Loren Legarda, Vicente Sotto III and John Osmeña.

Rounding out the list of nine "sure" candidates were Representatives Francis Escudero and Alan Peter Cayetano, lawyer Aquilino Pimentel III and San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito, who were picked for their "youth and progressive views." Ejercito is Estrada's son by actress Guia Gomez.

Honasan, 58, a cashiered colonel, has

GRINGO/A6



ARMED WITH M16 Armalites, members of the Regional Mobile Group VI aim at the son of Iloilo Gov. Niel Tupas, Junjun, and other supporters who barricaded the provincial capitol. The Tupas camp is no match for the high-powered long arms of the dispersal team.

'CESSION' OR 'RENT'?

Malaysia pays Sulu Sultan's heirs yearly

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

THE PAYMENT WAS MADE IN the same way it had been made for the past 43 years.

Every November or December, the

Malaysian Embassy in Makati City hands a Standard Chartered Bank check in the amount of 5,300 Malaysian ringgit (or a little over P74,000) to the legal counsel of the descendants of Sultan Jamalul Ahlam of the Kingdom of Sulu.

To the Malaysian government, the check represents the "cession" payment for the disputed state of Sabah (formerly known as North Borneo) in Malaysia.

But Sultan Ahlam's descendants, in-

MALAYSIA/A4

Volunteers found boy Denver tied to post in a shanty

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THEY FIRST SAW THE BOY THEY CALL Denver inside a shanty on Barangka Drive in Mandaluyong City. His legs were tied to a wooden post.

Denver is suffering from autism.

His mother told volunteers of the Katipunan ng mga Magulang ng mga Batang May Kapansanan that Denver had jumped off the upper floor of the

VOLUNTEERS/A8

'Waiting list for diagnosis is one year'

By Tarra Quismundo

(Second of a series)

IN THIS PUBLIC HOSPITAL TEEMING with indigent patients every day, experts stretch themselves while working against time to rewire the brain of a child with autism.

The patient's list may be more than what they can handle, but developmental and behavioral pediatricians at the University of the Philippines-Philippine General Hospital (UP-

SPECIAL PEOPLE

i-TEAM Report
Fernando del Mundo
Chief

PGH) are making do with what they have to attend to charity cases of autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) who walk into the facility day by day.

"Our waiting list for diagnosis is one year. We have that many patients. There are that many patients who

have special needs," says Dr. Stella Manalo, the hospital's child protection specialist. She says doctors see around six to 10 patients per day and clinic is four times a week. "So you can put that at 25 patients a week at an average," Manalo says.

Explaining the process of diagnosis and treatment for autism patients, Manalo says walk-in patients with the chief complaint of speech delay, a symptom of ASD onset, first goes

WAITING/A8

Sharp rise noted in Special Education students at UP

By Nikko Dizon

THE PAST YEARS HAVE SEEN AN EXPONENTIAL increase in the number of enrollees in the Special Education (SpEd) course, both in the graduate and undergraduate programs, at the state-run University of the Philippines (UP).

So much so that the university is considering imposing a quota on the number of students applying in the decade-old SpEd master's degree program, says Dr. Erlinda Camara, UP SpEd area coordinator.

"We have seen an influx of enrollees. We not

SHARP/A8



WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Extreme Northern Luzon will have mostly cloudy skies with passing light rains while Mindanao will be mostly cloudy with scattered rain showers and thunderstorms. The rest of Luzon will have cloudy skies with isolated light rains while the rest of the country will be partly cloudy with isolated rain showers or thunderstorms. COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO, INQUIRER RESEARCH/01/17/07 SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Halo/Haloed	Partly Cloudy
Bagui	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Taguig	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laos	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legaspi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

GMA sees 'boom' in 2007

FRESH FROM THE COUNTRY'S SUCCESSFUL hosting of the annual leaders' summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday confidently declared 2007 as the "boom year for the economy," a time of "great hopes and expectations."

"We are going past the restricted hurdles in the economy...The direction is clear—a strong and vibrant Philippine democracy under the blessings of economic freedom and free enterprise," she told a meeting of the country's financial executives.

Reiterating her ambitious plan for the Philippines to join the ranks of First World economies by 2020, the President said this could be attained even more if the country was united.

"We must remain united and fix on the rising star of the future," she said in her speech during the induction of new officers of the Financial Executives of the Philippines.

Trade Secretary Peter Pavila told reporters that the President's confidence that this year would be an economic boom year sprung from her talks with leaders at the Asean summit, including the leaders of Asean's East Asian partners.

Pavila cited for instance Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao's assurances to the President that China—the world's fastest growing economy—would "provide us the means to further concretize" economic relations.

Wen and Asean leaders on Sunday signed a landmark cooperation deal to open market access to Beijing's lucrative services sector, a major step toward the ambitious goal of establishing a free trade area between China and Asean in the next 10 years.

"With the onset of the economic integration of Asean, this opens the markets for all members of Asean and the Philippines will definitely gain much from the integration of the Asean economic markets," Pavila said at the weekly press briefing yesterday of Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita.

Asean leaders last weekend agreed to accelerate economic integration within the region in

2015, or five years ahead of schedule.

The President told the financial executives that her administration's much vaunted tax reform program had caught the interest of Singapore, Asean's richest economy.

She said Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, who is embarking on tax reform in the city state this year, had told her at the Asean summit that "he is copying the Philippines."

She said she had told Lee of the efficiency of the country's value added tax system and how the government had collected "more in VAT revenues than we had projected."

She told Finex executives the government achieved more than 80 percent tax efficiency "only in the first year of [the expanded VAT's] implementation."

She thanked the financial executives for their "steady faith" in the economy which she said "mirrors the confidence of the global financial community."

The President said the government intended to continue not only in making its tax collection effort more efficient but also in generating more revenues, and with "judicious spending."

"Efforts will be increased to sell off government assets earmarked for privatization," she said.

Ms Arroyo vowed to continue investing in infrastructure development, such as in the power sector, to further spur the economy.

She will continue to work to make government agencies more efficient, she said, and related how the National Power Corp., the state power generator which she said used to be the "main culprit of our consolidated public sector deficit" was now "for the first time in 10 years" a multi-billion dividend to the national government.

Christine Avendaño



CAREER CHOICES

High school seniors sweat it out at the Araullo High School in Manila for the National Career Assessment Examination, which some about 1.8 million other high school students took yesterday. The nationwide test for graduating students seeks to guide students and their parents make career choices. The test is expected to correct the mismatch between the career choices of students and their actual skills.

ERIK ARAZAS

BIR lowers target, eyes retailers, docs, lawyers

TO MAKE UP FOR ITS HUGE P28.5 BILLION shortfall in tax collections last year, the Bureau of Internal Revenue said yesterday it would step up its drive against retailers as well as professionals like doctors and lawyers that do not issue official receipts.

Embattled BIR officials have also reduced their tax collection target this year by P18.2 billion.

BIR Commissioner Jose Mario Buñag had cited reduced bank interest rates, lower-than-expected inflation affecting their documentary stamp taxes on government securities and other "factors beyond our control" for the agency's failure to meet the P675.4 billion collection target for 2006.

Armed with what he calls more "realistic and attainable" tax programs, Buñag said he would meet or even surpass the P765.9 billion tax collection goal assigned to him by the

Department of Finance for 2007.

Industry benchmarking, taxpayers' profiling and a strengthened taxpayers' database are some of his new programs aimed at helping him meet the target this time around.

The failure of BIR to meet its collection target is often cited by international economic consultants as a negative factor affecting Philippine credit and investment ratings. A decreased government budget deficit last year was credited mainly to decreased spending.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves met with Buñag and other BIR officials on Monday to find ways and means to increase tax collections this year.

Buñag cited the BIR's "manpower shortage" but assured Teves that it would not be a hindrance to maximize collection efforts. Teves reportedly also promised to address this issue.

In a statement to media, the BIR chief reported that "millions of pesos have already been collected as penalties from establishments caught violating regulations on the issuance of official receipts (ORs)."

"We have started imposing penalties against many establishments, including professionals that do not issue ORs and sales invoices," Buñag said.

If retailers are found to be frequent violators, the BIR will padlock their establishment and file criminal charges against them, he warned.

Asst. Commissioner Aida Simborio of the Taxpayer Assistance Service said that a "sophisticated system" called "No-OR-Complaint" is a new facility with an e-mail address to receive complaints and information from taxpayers on establishments that do not issue ORs. With reports from Cynthia D. Balana

Evidence vs Nani Perez gathering dust, says lawyer

By Norman Bordadora

allegedly extorted from Jimenez in 2001.

LAWYER FRANK CHAVEZ YESTERDAY SAID the evidence of plunder that he submitted against former Justice Secretary Hernando Perez may just be gathering dust in the dockets of the Office of the Ombudsman.

Chavez made the remark after an Ombudsman assistant special prosecutor said on Monday that Perez plunder could still be charged with plunder if new evidence is presented before the anti-graft body.

The Ombudsman on Jan. 8 recommended the filing of graft charges against Perez and three others based on a complaint of extortion by businessman Mark Jimenez, but stopped short of charging Perez with plunder.

"The evidence is already there. I don't need to resubmit them unless they have already shredded my complaint," said Chavez, a former solicitor general who has a separate complaint for plunder and money laundering against Perez involving the same \$2 million that Perez

Swiss sources

Chavez claimed to have obtained his evidence from Swiss government sources. He said the documents provided a paper trail of the fund transfer of the \$2 million and the bank accounts involved in the transactions.

Assistant Ombudsman Mark Jalandoni, explaining the absence of plunder in the Ombudsman's rap sheet against Perez, said the Ombudsman panel saw no probable cause in Jimenez's plunder complaint against the former justice secretary.

He said the \$2 million constituted only one payoff and did not constitute a series of criminal acts.

The threshold amount for an illegal act to constitute plunder is P50 million.

Chavez contended that "if the Ombudsman adopts this restrictive stipulation, any worker in government can steal P150 million, P200 million in one single incident and still not be charged with plunder. That is not the intent of the law."

Palace defends Davide posting

By Christine O. Avendaño

MALACANANG YESTERDAY CITED LEGAL jurisprudence and even the case of 11 Cabinet members for its move to allow retired Supreme Court Chief Justice Hilario Davide to assume his new post as ambassador to the United Nations without being confirmed by the Commission on Appointments.

This was the defense put up by Palace officials as they scoffed at the threat of Sen. Jingoy Estrada to ask the UN to reject Davide's appointment which the latter decried as "illegal."

"I don't see how such matter can be interfered into by the UN," Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita told reporters.

Ermita was reacting to Estrada's threat to ask the UN to reject Davide's appointment on the ground that his oath-taking last Sunday in Cebu which was administered by President Macapagal-Arroyo disregarded Congress and the rule of law.

Ms Arroyo's action also drew criticisms from Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. who contended that the former high court chief could not assume his post

pending the confirmation of his appointment by the CA.

But at Ermita's weekly press briefing, Acting Foreign Secretary Erlinda Basilio said the move to administer the oath on Davide by the President was "legal and has also constitutional basis."

Ermita also argued that Davide could assume his new post the same way 11 Cabinet members who had not yet been confirmed by the CA had done so.

"There are decisions in the Supreme Court upholding such decision," Basilio said, noting that President Arroyo had the right and the power to do so since she was appointing him to the position of Permanent Representative to the UN.

Basilio said since Davide had taken his oath of office, he could now assume his position, which had been held since 2003 by outgoing Ambassador Lauro Baja. Baja is on "an extended term."

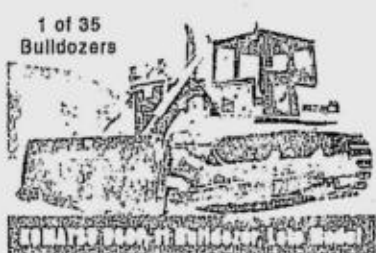
She also said that Davide needed only to present to UN officials the letter of the President accrediting him to the position.

But Ermita acknowledged there was still a "necessity" for Davide to go through the CA.

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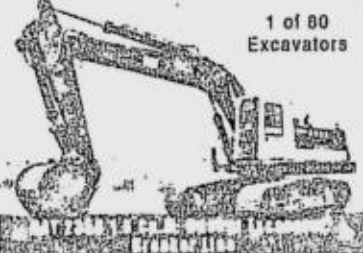


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Bulldozers



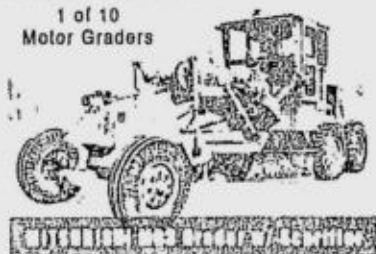
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Excavators



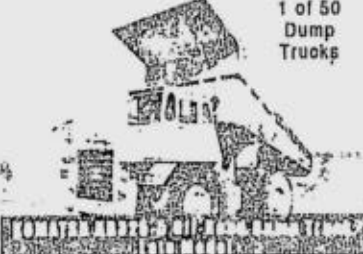
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Wheel Loaders



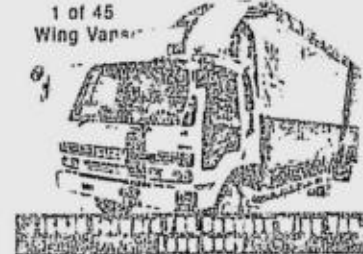
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Motor Graders



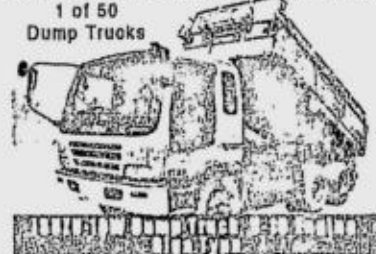
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Dump Trucks



1 of 45

Wing Vane



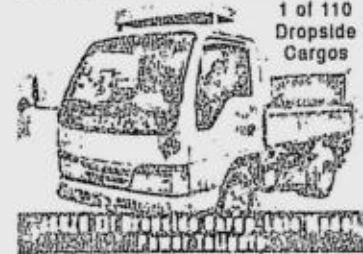
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Dump Trucks



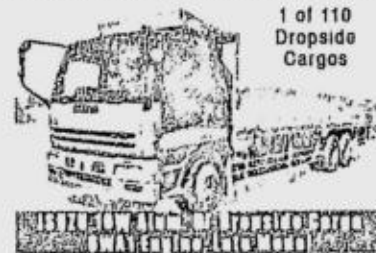
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Dropside Cargos



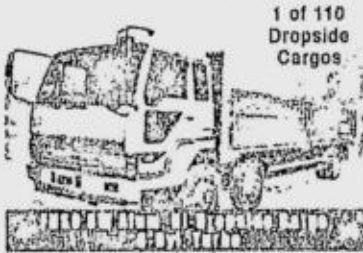
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Dropside Cargos



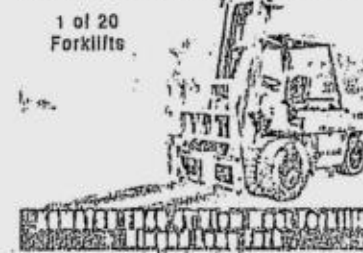
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Dropside Cargos



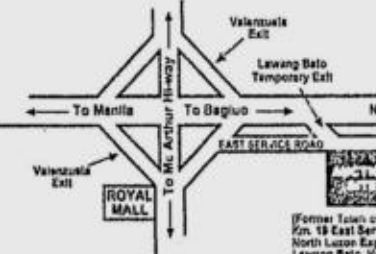
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Dropside Cargos



1 of 20

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Gov't standing firm on \$400 minimum pay for overseas DHs

THE GOVERNMENT IS STANDING firm on its new policy pegging the minimum pay for Filipino domestic helpers overseas at \$400, according to Labor Secretary Arturo Brion.

"We are determined to stick with this policy. The industry has put forward no good reason why we should

change our policy," he told a press conference yesterday.

The policy, which will double the old basic wage of \$200, is aimed at "reducing, if not eliminating, abuses on vulnerable Filipino women working as maids overseas," said Brion.

It is part of the government's

thrust to promote better standards, welfare and protection of Filipino women abroad, he said.

Applicants for domestic work overseas as well as recruiters mounted protest rallies in Manila and several provinces the other day to oppose the new rate policy and other new re-

strictions imposed by the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, an attached agency of the Department of Labor and Employment.

The new regulations were so restrictive "it would be better not to deploy domestic helpers overseas at all," said the recruiters groups which

threatened to shut down and hold up the deployment of hundreds of thousands of domestic helpers abroad.

Brion said the rallies were organized by "rich" recruiters who were only agitating the maids to protect their profits.

POEA chief Rosalinda Dimapilis-Baldoz said the 200,000 job orders

that the Federated Association of Manpower Exporters (FAME) claimed the Philippines would lose because the new regulations were still unrealized, noting that the figure would actually be distributed over the next four years and not actual employment. *Jerome Aning*



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Killing of top Abu confirmed

From page A1

Sulaiman, 40, an engineer by profession, was on the US government's list of wanted terrorists. A \$5-million reward had been offered for his capture, as well as for each of Janjalani and Hapilon.

Esperon showed reporters a close-up photo of Sulaiman, which he said was taken by operatives of the 8th Special Forces Company led by 1Lt. Amiran Mijares at the encounter site on Mount Dajo in Talipao on Tuesday morning.

There were no gunshot wounds in the head in that photo. In another photo, which Esperon did not show to reporters and which did not show the lower half of Sulaiman's body, a gunshot wound on the right shoulder could be seen.

Esperon said Sulaiman's identity was also confirmed through the "technical" assistance of US forces in Sulu.

Logistics officer

"He is called The Engineer. He is the logistics and supply officer and overall leader of the [Abu Sayyaf's] urban terrorist group. He is known to have direct links with the al-Qaida," Esperon said of Sulaiman.

"I recall that when we were operating in Basilan, many of the reports that I received were about him, including the collection of ransom money," Esperon added.

The AFP chief of staff said one of Sulaiman's wives and a military informant who had known him for five years identified the body, which troops reported was left behind when about 60 Abu Sayyaf fighters fled their camp during a military raid.

No other body was recovered at the site after the gun battle that reportedly lasted for about three hours.

Brig. Gen. Arturo Ortiz, commander of the Special Forces Regiment, said operatives identified Sulaiman based on distinguishing marks on his face—a mole on his left cheek, his distinctive eyelashes, and the gap between his two front teeth.

"Our intelligence operatives have confirmed that Abu Sulaiman was killed in the en-



AFP CHIEF OF STAFF Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. confirms the death of Sulaiman, a top al-Qaida-linked Abu Sayyaf commander, who's also wanted by the US. He had a \$5-million reward on his head. RAFFY LERMA

counter yesterday (Tuesday)," Ortiz said.

In the initial reports after the raid, the military said Sulaiman was believed to be among those wounded. It said one body had been found at the site.

Esperon said the military was able to confirm on Tuesday night that the body was Sulaiman's.

He said troops had earlier buried the body "out of respect" after taking photos, but that it was immediately dug up when people who had known Sulaiman recognized him from the pictures.

The body is now at Camp Teodulfo Bautista in Jolo, Sulu, the headquarters of the 104th Army Brigade.

Intelligence fusion

Esperon said military operations in Sulu would continue until all major commanders of the Abu Sayyaf were killed.

"We are confident that with the death of Abu Sulaiman, who is actually the No. 1 planner of most of the activities of the Abu Sayyaf, their activities will go down considerably," he said, adding:

"We have resolved that this group must be finished off. Its major commanders must be finished off so that we can put an end to this notorious terrorist group."

Esperon said Philippine troops had a working setup in terms of "intelligence fusion" with US

forces in Sulu.

He said the AFP was getting "very critical, very substantial intelligence" support from US troops.

"As far as I'm concerned, intelligence is always very critical and substantial. You cannot launch an effective operation without effective intelligence. But while I thank our counterparts for helping out in intelligence fusion, we must also credit our own operatives, especially those who are providing the very important human intelligence aspect of intelligence," Esperon said.

Maj. Gen. Eugenio Cedo, military chief in Western Mindanao, told INQUIRER Mindanao that Sulaiman's death was a big blow to the Abu Sayyaf.

Cedo, who had earlier flown to Sulu with military and police experts to help identify the body, said the AFP would continue its operations against the extremist group and its supposed allies from the regional terror group Jamaah Islamiyah (JI), who were believed hiding in Sulu.

In encounters last week in Tawi-Tawi and Sulu, troops killed seven Abu Sayyaf members, including three subcommanders—Bandang Sali, Jundam Jamalul alias Black Killer and Abu Hubaida—and an Indonesian JI member identified only as Gufran.

About 8,000 troops have been sent to Sulu since August to go after remaining Abu Sayyaf mem-

bers, which the military estimates to number around 400.

D-E-A-D

In Malacaniang, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said Sulaiman's death was a "collateral effect" of the RP-US Balikatan war games.

"He had a P5-million and \$1-million [reward] on his head and we don't know who will be reported by the military as responsible for giving the information about Abu Sulaiman. But the important thing is he is dead. D-E-A-D," Ermita said at his weekly press briefing.

He said the Palace was glad that government operations against the Abu Sayyaf were "reaping success."

"At the rate they're going ... with the constant pressure from the [AFP], especially the Special Forces, the Rangers and the Marines, it will not be long before we account for these significant commanders of the Abu Sayyaf, and, for that matter, the death or capture of JI personalities in the person of Dulmatin and Patek," Ermita said.

He also said Sulaiman's death meant that the Abu Sayyaf was weakening.

"The center of gravity of any dissident group is the commander," he said. "We are succeeding in our counter-dissident operations."

Ermita also disclosed that he

IN THE KNOW

'The engineer'

ABU SULAIMAN WAS BELIEVED responsible for planning the kidnapping of 20 people, including three Americans, from the Dos Palmas resort in Palawan on May 27, 2001.

Eventually the hostages, who were transported to Basilan Island, escaped or were released after payment of ransom. But American Guillermo Sobero was beheaded; Martin Burnham was killed and his wife Gracia Burnham wounded during a rescue attempt.

Sulaiman was also held responsible for planning the following:

- The hostage-taking of 200 civilians including Fr. Cirilo Nacorda in Basilan on June 2, 2001.

- The bomb attacks in Zamboanga City, including the bombing in Malagutay on Oct. 2, 2002.

- The bombing of the Awang Airport in Magulindanao on Feb. 20, 2003.

- The bombing of the Super-Ferry 14 off Corregidor Island, Bataan, on March 27, 2004 (for which he claimed responsibility).

- The Valentine's Day bombings in the cities of Davao, General Santos and Makati on Feb. 15, 2005 (for which he claimed responsibility).

- The bombing of a branch of the Chowking fast-food chain in Zamboanga City on Aug. 10, 2005.

- The bombing of a videoke bar near the 104th Infantry Brigade headquarters in Busbus, Jolo, Sulu, on Feb. 18, 2006.

MILF member

Sulaiman began his activism by joining the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

He broke off from the MILF when it signed a peace accord with the government in 1996, and decided to work in Saudi Arabia for a few years building highways and buildings, according to police intelligence reports.

In the late 1990s, he returned home and joined the Abu Sayyaf.

Having once been a builder, Sulaiman was asked by The Associated Press last year in a phone interview why he would want to destroy.

He said the Abu Sayyaf attacks were retribution for the many atrocities committed against Muslims worldwide.

"I know that being once a builder of things would make me more efficient in destroying them," he said. *Reports from Dona Pazzibugan, AP*

Abu Sayyaf Top 5

IN MAY 2002, THE US GOVERNMENT offered up to \$5 million for information that would lead to the capture of each of the five leaders of the Abu Sayyaf:

- **Khadaffy Janjalani** (alias Abu Muktar), chieftain. Believed to be the group's link to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida.

The remains of a man killed in September are now being examined in the US to determine if they are those of Janjalani.

- **Aldam Tilao** (alias Abu Sabaya), former spokesperson and one of those who pulled off the Dos Palmas kidnapping. Reported killed in a sea encounter with Philippine forces in 2002.

- **Jainal Antel Sali** (alias Abu Sulaiman), senior leader and

spokesperson. Killed in a clash with Philippine troops in Sulu on Jan. 16.

- **Hamsiraji Marusi Sali** (alias Jose Ramirez). Said the group received financial support from people close to former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. Shot dead in a 2004 clash in Basilan; the US government awarded \$359,600 to three men who helped locate him.

- **Isnilon Hapilon** (alias Abu Musab). Indicted in a US court for involvement in the Dos Palmas kidnapping. Reported captured in July 2002, but it turned out to be a false report. Currently at large. *Cyril Bonabente and Kate Pedrosa, INQUIRER Research*

would meet today with a top US Embassy official who had asked to see him.

He said he intended to ask the official about the results of the Federal Bureau of Investigation

inquiry into whether the body dug from a grave in Sulu last September was that of Khadaffy Janjalani. *With reports from Inquirer Mindanao and Christine O. Avendaño in Manila*

Malaysia pays Sulu Sultan's heirs yearly

From page A1

cluding the current generation led by Jamalul Kiram III, the 33rd Sultan of Sulu, and his brother Ismael Kiram II, consider it "rent."

Whether the payment is "cession" or "rent" is the crux of the problem that has been hounding the Philippines and Malaysia virtually since 1878, when Sultan Ahlam signed an agreement to lease Sabah to the British North Borneo Company, according to Abraham J. Idjirani, spokesperson of the Sultan of Sulu and Datu Raja Muda (Crown Prince) Agbimuddin Kiram.

The annual payment for Sabah—spanning 30,000 square miles and home to rich natural re-

sources such as timber and rubber as well as the world's biggest tree-dwelling ape, or the orangutan—is even less than the cost of one square meter in the central business district of Makati, which is about P250,000, lamented Idjirani, brother-in-law of the 33rd Sultan of Sulu.

Brunei sultan's gift

North Borneo, or Sabah, was part of the mighty sultanate of Sulu, which, at the height of its power in the 16th century, covered Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Basilan, Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga del Norte, Sibugay and Palawan.

Per Idjirani's paper titled "The Sabah Claim and The Vision of a

Community of Peace and Prosperity," the sultanate acquired North Borneo in 1704, when the Sultan of Brunei ceded the territory to the Sultan of Sulu after the latter helped quell a rebellion instigated by the former's half-brother.

With the 1878 lease agreement, the British North Borneo Company paid rent in the amount of 5,300 Mexican gold pieces to Sultan Ahlam's four royal sons until 1936.

Payments suspended

Sultan Jamalul Kiram II (the 32nd Sultan of Sulu) died in 1936, and from that year to 1950, the payments were suspended.

The then British consul in Manila recommended that pay-

ments be stopped following then President Manuel L. Quezon's declaration not to recognize the sultan's successor.

The situation dragged on until the outbreak of World War II. It was only in 1950 that Sultan Punjungan Kiram, crown prince of the sultanate at the time of Sultan Jamalul Kiram II's death, went to the British consulate in Manila to demand that payments be resumed.

Mackaskie judgment

The heirs of Sultan Jamalul Kiram II also filed a case in the Sessions Court of North Borneo in Sandakan, and the court eventually mandated the British company to resume payments.



In what is now known as the 1939 Mackaskie Judgment, the court also named the nine principal heirs of Sultan Jamalul Kiram II—Datu Punjungan Kiram, Datu Esmail Kiram, Dayang Dayang Piandao Kiram, Dayang Dayang Sitti Rada Kiram, Princess Tarhata Kiram, Princess Sakinur-In Kiram, Dayang Dayang Putli Jahara Kiram, Dayang Dayang Siti Mariam Kiram and Mora Napsa.

It likewise declared Punjungan Kiram administrator of the territory.

The British North Borneo Company resumed the payments in 1950 until 1962.

In 1963, when then peninsular Malaya established the Federation of Malaysia that included North Borneo, the rights of the British company were transferred to the government.

The new government of Malaysia thus assumed the annual lease payments, and the currency was changed to 5,300 Malaysian ringgit.

Sabah not for sale

There have been many attempts over the past 40 years to settle the Sabah claim, which boils down to ownership and the interpretation of the 1878 lease agreement.

In 1993, for instance, discussions between President Fidel V. Ramos and Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad led to an agreement to form the Sulu-Sabah Development Foundation, which was to be funded jointly by the two governments.

The foundation, however, was never formally organized.

And then in 1998, the political secretary of the Malaysian Embassy in Manila advised then Crown Prince Esmail Kiram of the

desire of the Malaysian government to pay \$5 billion to settle the Sabah claim.

Under the proposal, about \$2 billion was to be used to develop the Sulu archipelago, and \$3 billion was to be distributed to the heirs over a period of time.

But Esmail Kiram rejected the offer, saying it would betray the interests of the sultanate's constituents. He also reiterated that Sabah was not for sale.

In September 2002, President Macapagal-Arroyo ordered that the Legislative-Executive Advisory Council on Sabah be reconstituted to again discuss issues related to the claim.

Then in September 2004, the Interim Supreme Royal Ruling Council formed by Sultan Jamalul Kiram III formally requested the United Nations for an immediate resolution of the claim.

Still unresolved

But to this day, the issue remains unresolved.

Philippine Ambassador to Malaysia Victoriano Lecaros admitted to the INQUIRER that the Sabah claim was not one of the priority issues for resolution in bilateral talks with Malaysia.

"Right now, it has not been given any priority. We have other, more immediate concerns," Lecaros said by phone from Cebu City last week, during the Association of Southeast Asian Nations summit.

Areas of cooperation

"Rather than dwell on something on which we have no mutual agreement, we would rather talk [about] many areas of cooperation, like the Asean, trade, security and poverty reduction," he said.

But for the heirs and the people of the Sultanate of Sulu, the issue continues to rankle.

The heirs may each receive only a little over P700 from the annual "cession" or "rent" payment, but they consider it a recognition of their dominion over the rich territory of Sabah, which many Filipinos from the Sultanate of Sulu consider a part of their homeland.

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Corrections

IN EARLY COPIES of the Jan. 11 issue, a front-page story—"MJ clears GMA in extortion"—misstated the first name of a former public official allegedly involved in a multimillion-dollar scam. He is former Justice Secretary Hernando—not Hernani—Perez.

IN THE JAN. 14 ISSUE, an Across the Nation story on Page A16—"Island kids suffer from lack of bridge"—erroneously stated that "martial law was declared in the 1960s." President Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law on Sept. 21, 1972.

IN THE SAME ISSUE, the "Separate Opinion" column of Isagani Cruz on Page A12—"Surrender of sovereignty"—misstated the first name of the judge who handled the rape case against American Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith. He is Judge Benjamin—not Bernardo—Pozon.

The same column misstated the first name of the Court of Appeals justice who penned the decision dismissing Smith's petition that questioned his detention at the Makati City Jail. The decision was penned by Justice Apolinario—not Apolonio—Bruselas Jr.

IN THE JAN. 16 ISSUE, the "Viewpoint" column of Juan L. Mercado on Page A10—"Waving goodbye as cop-out"—mis-spelled the surname of South Africa's education minister. The correct spelling of the surname of South Africa's education minister is Kader Asmal—not Assmal.

Watchdog group draws up 10 commandments for Catholic voters

WHO SHOULD CATHOLICS VOTE for in the coming May elections?

The Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV), an election watchdog initiated by lay members of the Church more than a decade ago, has come up with a list of criteria packaged as "10 Commandments for Responsible Voting."

The ninth commandment, for in-

stance, refers to immorality: "Thou shalt not vote for candidates living an immoral life."

The prescription apparently refers to candidates, both men and women, who are involved in extramarital affairs.

"The kind of government we get is the fruit of the votes we cast," PPCRV chair Henrietta de Villa

wrote in the foreword of her group's "Pinoy Voters' Academy: Ang Drama sa Likod ng Halalan" (The Drama Behind the Elections).

The immorality issue was highlighted during the 1998 presidential elections when then Vice President Joseph Estrada was running for the top elective post. Critics scored Estrada, a former actor, for being a

womanizer, drinker and gambler.

1. Thou shalt vote according to the dictate of your conscience.

2. Thou shalt respect the decision of others in choosing their candidates.

3. Thou shalt seek to know the moral integrity, capabilities, and other personal qualities of the candidates you will vote for.

4. Thou shalt strive to understand the issues, platform, and programs of candidates and parties seeking your vote.

5. Thou shalt not sell your vote.

6. Thou shalt not vote for candidates using guns, goons and gold.

7. Thou shalt not vote for candidates with records of graft and corruption.

8. Thou shalt not vote for candidates just because of "utang na loob" (debt of gratitude), popularity, or "pakikisama" (camaraderie).

9. Thou shalt not vote for candidates living an immoral life.

10. Thou shalt put the welfare of the country above all else in choosing the candidates you will vote for.

Christian V. Esguerra

Labor chief to ask GMA to veto minimum pay hike

By Jerome Aning

LABOR SECRETARY ARTURO BRION said yesterday he would tell President Macapagal-Arroyo to veto a pending bill that would raise workers' minimum wages by P125 over the next three years.

Brion said the wage hike would be disastrous for the economy, adding a better option would be to raise wages through regional wage boards and collective bargaining agreements.

"The government will not entertain any compromise. It's not only a question of benefits [for the workers] but a question of what will eventually happen to them," Brion said in a press conference.

In reaction to his statements, militant labor groups denounced Brion for "mouthing the capitalist line."

The Secretary reiterated his warning that more workers would lose their jobs if such an increase is implemented, arguing that many firms simply cannot afford it.

Ninety-nine percent of the 783,000 firms in the country are micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises which would surely opt to lay off personnel, Brion said.

The proposed legislated wage increase bill passed in Congress before Christmas would give workers a pay increase of P45, P40 and another P40 in the next three years. A Senate counterpart bill, filed by Sen. Jinggoy Estrada, provides for an immediate P100 per day increase.

Brion twitted the congressmen for "politicizing the wage issue," especially with the onset of the election session.

The House bill, labor officials estimate, would increase labor costs by P591.8 billion in the next three years, and crank up total wage expenses to as much as P1.9 trillion, labor officials said.

DOLE undersecretary for labor standards Romeo Lagman further added that the wage hike would benefit only a limited number of workers—about 12.4 million workers in the private sector or 38 percent of total employed.

The rest of the labor force or about 21 million—composed of those in households, family-operated activities, government, own-account and unpaid family workers—will suffer the consequences such as higher prices of basic goods

and services.

The National Economic Development Agency estimates that a P125 wage hike would raise inflation by as much as 3.9 percent, increase unemployment by about 1.2 million jobs and slow down gross domestic product (GDP) growth by 3.5 percent.

The labor officials batted for minimum wage-fixing through the boards, arguing that this was more advantageous because it would take into account regional socio-economic disparities. Company disparities are ideally tackled by unions through collective bargaining, they added.

Anakpawis party-list Representative Rafael Mariano does not agree. He said Labor Secretary Arturo Brion was obviously conditioning the minds of the public for the President's junking of the wage hike bill.

"Brion's position is no different from the capitalist line that raising workers' wages is anti-worker," Mariano chided.

"Wage increases can only be achieved through hard struggle," he said in the vernacular, telling workers to "direct (their) punches against the Arroyo regime."

Asean lawmakers form united front to fight corruption

THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS (Asean) legislators have firmed up a united front to fight official corruption in the region to ensure the efficient use of public funds, stimulate investments and put in place an effective legal infrastructure that would provide the antidote to official indiscretion, Sen. Edgardo J. Angara said yesterday.

Angara said in a press statement that the Southeast Asian Parliamentarians Against Corruption (Seapac) was formed to banner the anticorruption effort from the region's parliaments and congresses on a coordinated and institutional basis. The 26 founding members of the Seapac came from Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam and the Philippines.

Angara, who is the Seapac president, had spearheaded the establishment of the Seapac in the wake of his participation in the Ottawa-based Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption or Gopac.

He said "the development initiatives and all the cooperative measures aimed at fostering economic growth and political stability in the Asean region has to be complemented by a strong commitment to combat corruption on a regional scale."

The 26 founding members of the Seapac signed the Manila Declaration late last year calling for the fol-

lowing program of action:

- Endorse the ratification of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption

- Foster closer collaboration among legislators in the region to step up anticorruption work

- Review their respective state of laws, standards, systems and strategies to determine their adequacy and consistency with international commitments against corruption

- Promote the participation of all sectors of society in advancing the Rule of Law and good governance in the conduct of public and private affairs.

Angara said combating corruption is a task so tough that there should be "national and regional strategies" in fighting the scourge.

Angara had sponsored in the Senate the landmark law on government procurement which radically overhauled the rules of bidding and award in the public sector.

The law provides adequate safeguards to protect public money and even incorporates features of modern technology into the law to boost the safeguards.

During the deliberation at the committee level, it was revealed that at least P22 billion in public funds is being wasted yearly due to fraud in public bids and other forms of corruption.

Damaged S. Leyte roads now passable

By Leila B. Salaverria

NATIONAL ROADS IN SOUTHERN Leyte that were blocked or damaged recently due to heavy rains are now passable, the Department of Public Works and Highways reported yesterday.

The landslide clearing and repair works on the province's national thoroughfares were completed on Tuesday afternoon, according to DPWH Eastern Visayas Director Jaime Pacanan. He said all types of vehicles could use the said roads.

He said the now-passable thoroughfares were the Agas-agas section of the Mahaplag-Sogod-Libagon-Liloan Road; the Kahupina section of the Labagon-Hiomay-Angan Road; the Himay-Angan-Lipanto section of the Himay-Angan-Sr Bernard Road

and the Silagan Boundary-Bilatan Road.

"Immediately after the heavy downpour of rain, our dispatched equipment and maintenance crew conducted repair on washed-out surfacing materials and damaged drainage facilities," Pacanan said in a statement.

Aside from causing landslides and flooding, the torrential rain that hit Southern Leyte also prompted the evacuation of thousands of residents and led to the deaths of several people.

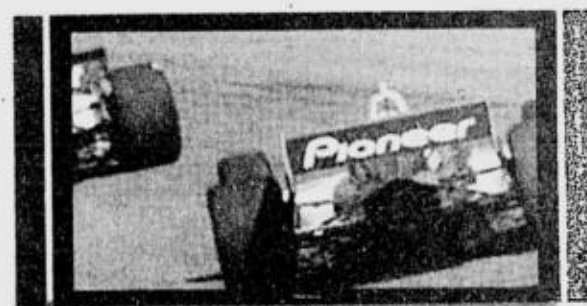
The DPWH also reported that several roads in Northern Samar, Albay, Davao Oriental and Leyte remain impassable.

One of these is the Palapag-Mapana-Lapnig Road in Northern Samar, which is still under flood-water.

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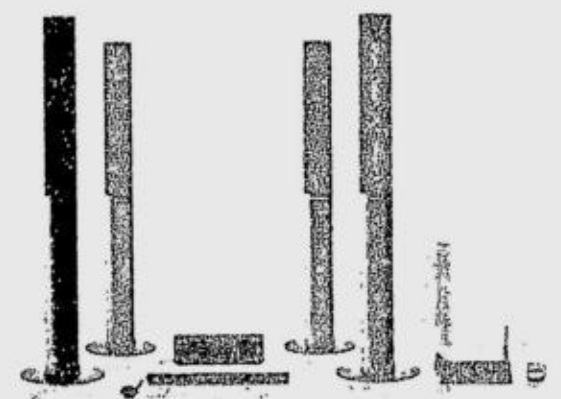
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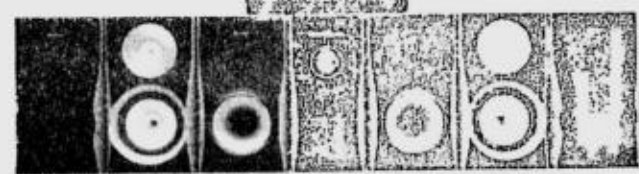
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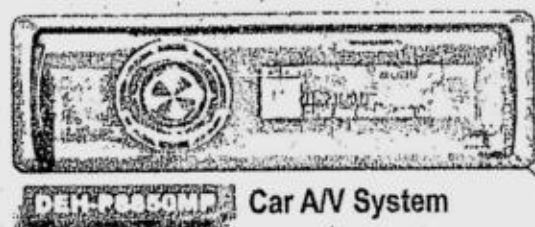
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BODY POLITIC: The Biofuels Act of 2006 is signed into law by President Arroyo at the Palace on Wednesday, thanks to bipartisan support in both Houses of Congress but the body language of Senate President Manuel Villar says otherwise, or so it seems. Villar appears uncomfortable at the signing of the landmark legislation in this series of photos while Speaker Jose de Venecia is all-out gung-ho (extreme right).

LYN RILLON

Palace courting Villar to join administration ticket

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY EDUARDO ERMITA yesterday said Malacañang was seeking the inclusion of Senate President Manuel Villar and other reelectionists in its Senate lineup for the May elections.

With less than one month to go

before the deadline for the filing of the certificates of candidacies, Ermita stressed the administration was being careful about its choices, saying "we are looking for real supporters of the President."

Asked whether the administration was putting a priority to get

Villar and other administration reelectionist senators to its fold, Ermita said: "Yes, you can say that."

Practical science

"Politics is a practical science. You should not plunge into it without thinking very

well," he said. "The objective is to be able to get the winning personalities and the winning ticket."

Presidential political adviser Gabriel Claudio said: "We will release our senatorial ticket in due time and we are confident of win-

ning at least eight of the senatorial seats."

Villar, who run under the administration's People's Power Coalition during the 2001 senatorial race, said his Nacionalista Party, would decide at the end of the month where it will

align itself.

"We are talking to small parties ... problem is we don't want to announce where we are aligning ourselves because its too early to get into politics," he told reporters.

Christine O. Avendaño

TRO aborts police assault on Iloilo capitol

From page A1

shouted while his lawyers read the TRO to reporters. Some 20 members of the regional police mobile group stood around 50 meters away from his office.

Hundreds of employees and his supporters erupted into cheers, cried and hugged each other as the TRO was read.

The policemen later withdrew from the five-story building as the employees booed and heckled them.

Antique Gov. Salvacion Zaldivar-Perez, chair of the Regional Development Council, condemned the armed assault on the capitol.

"This is terrible. This is like a police state. How could they beat up the people there? Shame on them (policemen)," Perez said in a telephone interview.

Doors smashed

Hundreds of police assaulted the Iloilo Provincial Capitol at around 4 p.m., smashing and destroying padlocked doors to physically remove Tupas.

The police in anti-riot gear and armed with M-16 Armalite rifles dispersed Tupas' supporters gathered at the provincial capitol entrance.

The provincial government employees cried and shouted as the assault team took over the five-story building.

Tupas' son and Provincial Board Member Niel Jr. suffered bruises. Policemen pushed and kicked him, and pointed their Armalite rifles at him.

The governor and his lawyers pleaded with the assault team to wait for a copy of the TRO issued by the Court of Appeals in Cebu.

Puno said his decision to let the police enforce the dismissal order on Tupas did not run counter to the deadline.

"That deadline is not a concession given to the officials," he said.

Hardline

Puno said that contrary to Tupas' hardline stance, Batangas Gov. Arman Sanchez, who is suspended for graft, had started to dismantle the barricades around the provincial capitol in Batangas City.

"If Governor Tupas will do the same, he will also be given until (Thursday noon) to stay. But he has a different position," Puno said.

"He continues to be defiant. That is already sedition," the interior secretary said in an interview

at around 3:30 p.m.

Puno said at that time that he would order the Philippine National Police to disperse Tupas' supporters on the capitol premises "in the next half-hour" if negotiations for him to leave fell through.

"I want to settle things peacefully but this business of taking the matter to the streets has to end," he told the INQUIRER.

"The law has to be followed," Puno said.

Batangas capitol

Puno said the only remaining barricade at the Batangas Capitol was a 40-foot container van. "But they are already waiting for a lifter to remove it," Puno said.

"They have also said that if Governor Sanchez doesn't get a TRO by (Thursday noon), they will leave the capitol," he added.

Sanchez yesterday asked the Court of Appeals to invalidate the Ombudsman order placing him under preventive suspension.

He also asked the court that a TRO be issued to stop the enforcement of the Ombudsman's order.

For his part, Esquivel said he would fight for his right to stay in office.

"What I am doing and will do [under the situation] are all under the rule of law," Esquivel told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview.

Puno said that as in Batangas,

the situation had also improved in Pasay City where dismissed Mayor Trinidad had reportedly backed down.

He urged local officials that "instead of defying orders from a competent authority by resorting to disruptive behavior, to seek recourse before the proper courts because the Ombudsman's decisions, while executory, are not yet final and can still be appealed and possibly reversed."

In tears

At a press conference held earlier in the day, Tupas broke into tears as he vowed to stay in office even after the expiration of Puno's deadline.

"I vow that they cannot forcibly remove me from office. I am ready to offer my life to stand by my principles and the rights of the people whom I have sworn to uphold," Tupas said at a press conference.

The governor's voice cracked and he cried openly as he thanked his supporters who have camped out for four straight days at the grounds of the provincial capitol to block his removal from office.

"I have not experienced anything like this in my 30 years in public office," said Tupas.

Tupas and his lawyers insisted that the immediate implementation of the Ombudsman's dismissal order was illegal because they still could appeal the case and question the order in court.

Lawyers of Tupas and dismissed Board Members Domingo Oso and Cecilia Capadosa filed yesterday a 13-page petition for review in the Court of Appeals in Cebu City.

The petitioners also asked the appeals court to issue a TRO and preliminary injunction against the enforcement of the dismissal order.

Abuse of discretion

The petition for review named as respondents Puno, Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez, newly installed officials Gov. Roberto Armada and Vice Gov. Emmanuel Gallar, and officials of the Peoples Graft Watch of Iloilo Inc., which filed the graft cases against the petitioners.

The petitioners accused the Ombudsman and the DILG of "grave abuse of discretion and gross ignorance of the law."

They cited five recent rulings of the Supreme Court which said that only decisions of the Ombudsman on administrative cases that involves the penalty of public censure, reprimand or suspension of not more than one month, or a fine not equivalent to one month salary were executory and non-appealable.

Drilon warning

Stalwarts of the Liberal Party wing of Sen. Franklin Drilon warned that the dismissal of local chief executives would intensify as the political campaign for the May 14 elections heats up.

Former Batanes Rep. Florencio "Butch" Abad, former LP presi-



TUPAS in tears

dent, said the administration was resorting to these actions in the face of looming defeat in some areas in the countryside.

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, LP member, warned other local officials across the country that they could suffer the fate of Tupas because the Ombudsman could quickly rule on graft complaints lodged by "unknown individuals."

Interior Undersecretary Wencelito Andanan said the DILG was not cracking down on the opposition.

He said the DILG had implemented more suspension and dismissal orders against allies of the administration than those against opposition members. *With reports from Norman Bordonara, Armand N. Nocum, TJ Burgonio and Edson C. Tandoc Jr. in Manila; and Anselmo Roque and Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon*

Gringo not among Erap's nine 'sure' ...

From page A1

been detained at Fort Sto. Domingo in Sta. Rosa, Laguna, since he was captured in mid-November last year in connection with the July 2003 "Oakwood mutiny" mounted by a band of disgruntled junior military officers.

"Honasan is facing a rebellion charge, which is non-bailable. It will be difficult for him to campaign," former Immigration Commissioner Rufus Rodriguez, Estrada's spokesperson, said in an interview.

Deadweight

Another source close to Estrada said the coalition also foresaw that Honasan, if he wins but is convicted of the rebellion case, would be barred from serving his term in the Senate. "He's virtually a dead weight," the source said.

Honasan on Tuesday filed a motion Tuesday to be allowed to file personally his certificate of candidacy as an independent at the

Commission on Elections in Manila. His lawyer said he was still seeking the coalition's endorsement.

Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos said Honasan need not go personally to the poll agency to file his candidacy. He could do it through a representative.

Arroyo, Angara not in

Also not in the coalition list are Sen. Joker Arroyo, who has not signified his intention to seek reelection, and Sen. Edgardo Angara, who has not approached the coalition for inclusion. Both are qualified for reelection.

"The nine are already in," Rodriguez said.

He pointed out that the candidates were selected by the ad hoc committee, not by Estrada alone. "This is not an Estrada lineup; this is a coalition lineup."

Those being eyed for the final three slots were either former Sen. Tessie Aquino-Oreta or her nephew, Tarlac Rep. Benigno

Aquino III, Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan, Sen. Ralph Recto, and former Sen. Raul Ro-co's widow Sonia.

Oreta and Aquino

Oreta and Aquino have yet to decide who between them is running for senator. "We're still continuing our talks cognizant of the fact that we're not going to be pitted against each other," Aquino said in a briefing at the Senate.

Pangilinan and Recto were still studying whether to join the coalition slate. The list will be finalized in the next two weeks, according to Rodriguez.

"The coalition is considering them, and in the same manner, they're considering the coalition," he said, referring to Pangilinan of Liberal Party and Recto of Nacionalista Party.

Recto said he had not decided whether to join the UNO-led coalition slate and that he was still consulting his family, friends

and the Senate Wednesday Group. Pangilinan said the party had yet to decide on the matter.

Trillanes

Also yesterday, State Prosecutor Juan Pedro Navera said the Department of Justice was not objecting to the request of Magdalo leader Lt. (jg) Antonio Trillanes IV that he be allowed to temporarily go out of jail to personally file his certificate of candidacy.

However Navera said the DOJ would oppose the same request from Honasan.

"We will oppose that because he is a flight risk as well as a security risk as shown by his record," said Navera.

Trillanes, along with 300 other officers and men, staged a mutiny in July 2003 in Oakwood premier hotel in Makati City and demanded the resignation of President Macapagal-Arroyo. *With reports from Armand N. Nocum, Tarra Quismundo and Jerome Aning*

Mating game: How woman sizes up man?

From page A1

have discovered that a woman, when sizing up a man, takes her cues from other women around him.

If the other women are looking happily at the man, that has a big influence on the woman's assessment. The more female smiles there are, the woman is more likely to consider the guy a catch.

Photo test

Researchers led by Benedict Jones of the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, recruited 28 young women whose average age was 24.

The volunteers first looked at photographs of four young men wearing neutral expressions and looking directly at the camera.

The men were shown in pairs, and the women had to judge which of the two male faces on a photo was the more attractive, apportioning their preference a score on an eight-point scale.

The same male faces were shown again to the volunteers. This time, though, the male faces were flanked by a female face—a woman, shown in profile, who either looked neutrally at the man or smiled at him.

After this, the volunteers took another look at the paired faces, as in the first step of the experiment, and were asked to give another attractiveness rating.

Many of the women volunteers revised sharply downward their initial grading of the man—by more than 10 percent on average—if his picture had been next to a woman with a neutral expression.

But the women sharply revised upward their grading, finding the man on the photo more attractive by an average of at least 15 percent, if the woman looking at him had a smile on her face.

Reverse for men

But the reverse held true for men, the researchers found.

Twenty-eight young men volunteers took part in the same experiment—and their rating of the likability of the male faces plummeted if the man was being smiled at by a woman.

But if the woman had a neutral look, the rating went up.

The findings tell us a lot about how sexual competition affects our views, the study says.

"Desired" men are more attractive to women but conversely more of a threat to other males.

Among females in other species, "mate choice copying" has already been spotted among guppies, Japanese quail and zebra finches.

Darwinian pressures

This is the first time, however, that the phenomenon has been confirmed empirically among humans.

Evolutionary psychologists say the copycat reflex is the result of Darwinian pressures.

If a female faces lots of potential mates but has difficulties in choosing the best one—or to do so would cost too much time or energy—she can help herself by taking a steer from how rival females behave.

The paper appeared on Wednesday in *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*, a journal of the Royal Society, which is Britain's de facto academy of sciences. AFP



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION & COMMUNICATIONS LAND TRANSPORTATION OFFICE

East Avenue, Quezon City

E-mail Address: ltombbox@lto.gov.ph • Website: www.lto.gov.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

1. CY 2007 JANITORIAL SERVICES AT THE LTO CENTRAL OFFICE COVERING THE PERIOD FROM MARCH 1 TO DECEMBER 31, 2007
2. CY 2007 FREIGHT FORWARDING SERVICES COVERING THE PERIOD FROM MARCH 1 TO DECEMBER 31, 2007

The Land Transportation Office, through General Fund (Fund 101) intends to apply the sum of Three Million Four Hundred Thirty One Thousand Three Hundred Seventy Eight Pesos and 60/100 (P3,431,378.60) being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) of payment for the CY 2007 Janitorial Services Covering the Period from March to December 2007 and Two Million Two Hundred Four Thousand Five Hundred Seventeen Pesos and 62/100 (P2,204,517.62) being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) of payment for the CY 2007 Freight Forwarding Services covering the period from March 1 to December 31, 2007. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

The Land Transportation Office now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the items. The required delivery schedule will be indicated in the approved Contract. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least fifty percent (50%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the BAC Sub-Committee and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of P10,000.00, for each project in the form of cash. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

The Land Transportation Office will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on January 22, 2007 at 10:00 A.M. for Freight Forwarding Services and on January 22, 2007 at 2:00 P.M. for Janitorial Services at the LTO-Library, East Avenue, Quezon City.

Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on February 5, 2007 at 10:00 A.M. for Freight Forwarding Services and on February 5, 2007 at 2:00 P.M. for Janitorial Services. All bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in any of the following form.

Form of Security	Minimum Amount in % of Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid
1. Cash, certified check, cashier's check, manager's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit	One percent (1%)
2. Bank guarantee	One and a half percent (1 1/2%)
3. Surety Bond	Two and a half percent (2 1/2%)
4. Foreign government guarantee	One hundred percent (100%)

Late Bids shall not be accepted.

Bid opening shall be on February 5, 2007 at 10:00 A.M. for Freight Forwarding Services and on February 5, 2007 at 2:00 P.M. for Janitorial Services at LTO-Library, East Avenue, Quezon City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidder's representatives who choose to attend at the address below.

The Land Transportation Office reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Land Transportation Office
Atty. Jimmy G. Pesigan - Chairman, BAC
East Avenue, Quezon City
(02) 9219077 - telefax

(Sgd.) ATTY. JIMMY G. PESIGAN
BAC Chairman

Cops doubt new story of Bersamin slay witness

By Alcuin Papa

POLICE INVESTIGATORS SAID THEY doubted the veracity of a new alibi given by Rufino Panday, a witness in the murder of Abra Rep. Luis Bersamin, tending to show that he was not in Metro Manila when the congressman was killed.

Sr. Supt. Magtanggol Gatdula, the Quezon City police chief and head of Task Force Bersamin, yesterday scoffed at the timing of the release of a cell phone video purportedly showing that Panday was in Rizal province at the time of the Bersamin murder in Quezon City last Dec. 16.

"Why was the video released only now? It's so easy to show something like that but that needs to be authenticated," Gatdula said.

Panday, a former Army soldier, has retracted earlier statements to police investigators in which he confessed that he acted as a lookout during the Bersamin murder and that Abra Gov. Vicente Valera was involved.

He told police earlier that on the day Bersamin was killed, he met with one of the principal suspects, Freddie Dupo, a former vice mayor of La Paz town in Abra. He said Dupo had told him that he was forming a team to kill Bersamin because Valera had allegedly put out a P5-million contract on the congressman.

On Tuesday, a TV network aired a cell phone video showing Panday to have

been in Antipolo, Rizal inspecting a site that was to be secured by the Atron Security Agency, his employer.

The video was dated Dec. 16, the day Bersamin was killed, and showed that at the time of the killing Panday was meeting with Dupo.

Employees of the Atron Security Agency also told the television station that they were with Panday that day.

Gatdula said the release to media of the cell phone video was part of a "propaganda war" being waged by the Valera camp.

"We expect more of these things to come out in the coming days," he said.

He noted that the story of Panday's recantation was already being floated in the media last week.

According to a veteran investigator involved in the case, it was quite easy to alter the date and time shown in cell phone videos.

"It is intended to be utilized in defense of Valera," said the officer who requested anonymity.

Director Edgardo Doromal, chief of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG), said investigators were "still verifying" reports that Panday was indeed in Rizal

province on the day of the murder.

Doromal told reporters the other day that police had received unconfirmed reports that Valera had a P5-million media campaign fund to counter bad publicity and to direct attention away from Valera's alleged involvement in the Bersamin murder. With a report from Delmar Carifio, Inquirer Northern Luzon

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MONEY BACK GUARANTEE

Leviste's aide tried to defend self, says expert

RAFAEL DE LAS ALAS, THE LONGTIME AIDE of former Batangas governor Antonio "Tony" Leviste, may have tried to protect himself before he was shot to death, an initial report by a prominent forensic pathologist showed.

Dr. Raquel del Rosario-Fortun, pathologist at the University of the Philippines College of Medicine in Manila, said the presence of a wound on De las Alas' left forearm could mean the victim was instinctively trying to defend himself. Leviste, estranged husband of former Sen. Loren Legarda, had reportedly confessed to the shooting, claiming self-defense.

"In forensic pathology, there are certain injuries that could be classified as defense type based on location," Fortun told reporters in a press briefing after she conducted an autopsy on the victim's body.

The De las Alas children, Dinna and Nazareth, had requested for a second autopsy to find out the type of wounds their father sustained.

However, Fortun said the evaluation of the wound should be "placed in context" with the examination and consideration of important elements in the crime scene.

"It is too early to say anything definite," Fortun said. "I have information from the body now, but I still need more data from the crime scene."

The pathologist said she also needed to interview witnesses to shed light on the actual incident.

Margaux C. Ortiz

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, January 18, 2007
2nd Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Heb 7:25-8:6
Gospel: Mark 3:7-12

Jesus and his disciples withdrew to the lakeside and a large crowd from Galilee followed him. A great number of people also came from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, Transjordan and from the region of Tyre and Sidon, for they had heard of all that he was doing.

Because of the crowd, Jesus told his disciples to have a boat ready for him, to prevent the people from crushing him. He healed so many that all who had diseases kept pressing towards him to touch him. Even the people who had evil spirits, whenever they saw him, would fall down before him and cry out, "You are the Son of God."

But he warned them sternly not to tell anyone who he was.

Commentary
Jesus lives now to intercede for us! Jesus' new covenant is his blood/Eucharist and passion for living/dying with and for us. We know in our bodies by baptism/Eucharist that we are the Body of Christ. We know this covenant and live it with others who are the people of God in Jesus' own body. This new covenant and its freshness and power is in the person of Jesus.

Crowds sought him relentlessly, to hear his words and touch him, pushing up against him. Jesus and the disciples keep a boat at hand—the new ark, the Church as backup. Jesus stands between the crowds and the sea/the boat. Those who know him, know him in their sin and their disorders but he commands them not to reveal who he is. We are part of that crowd, or among the disciples.

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Republic of the Philippines
UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES IN THE VISAYAS
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
New Administration Building, Miag-ao Campus
Tel No. (033) 315-81-41; (033) 338-1535 local 180
Fax No. (033) 315-81-41
E-mail: upv_bacsec@yahoo.com
Website Address: http://www.upv.edu.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID (IAETB 2007-003)

1. The UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES IN THE VISAYAS, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites qualified suppliers to bid for the hereunder projects:

NAME OF PROJECTS	Location	APPROVED BUDGET FOR THE CONTRACT (ABC)	CONTRACT DURATION
A. Supply of Security Services for the various offices of the University	Miag-ao & Iloilo Campuses, BAC at Leganes, Iloilo, Batan Research Station in Batan, Aklan and Taklong Biological Station in Guimaras	P7,200,000.00	One (1) Year
B. Supply of Janitorial Services for the various offices of the University	Miag-ao & Iloilo Campuses	P3,669,326.40	One (1) Year

Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid Opening.

2. All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of RA 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

3. The schedule of activities is as follows:

Activities	Schedules	Venue
Issuance of Bid Documents	Starting January 22, 2007 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM	BAC Secretariat, U.P. Visayas, Miag-ao Campus
Pre-Bid Conference	January 31, 2007	Tea Room, Cafeteria Building, U.P. Visayas Iloilo City Campus
a) Security Services	a) 9:00 AM	
b) Janitorial Services	b) 10:00 AM	
Opening of Bids	February 14, 2007	Tea Room, Cafeteria Building, U.P. Visayas Iloilo City Campus
a) Security Services	a) 9:00 AM	
b) Janitorial Services	b) 10:00 AM	

4. Bid Opening shall be on February 14, 2007, 9:00 AM & 10:00 AM, respectively, to be held at the Tea Room, Cafeteria Building, U.P. Visayas, Iloilo City Campus to be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives. LATE BIDS SHALL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

5. The BAC will issue Eligibility Forms to interested bidders upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P200.00 for each project and a complete set of bidding documents upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of P5,000.00 for Security Services and P2,500.00 for Janitorial Services to the University Cashier. The bidding documents shall be received personally by the prospective bidder or his authorized representative starting January 22, 2007.

6. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the BAC at or before 9:00 AM and 10:00 AM, respectively, on February 14, 2007 at the Tea Room, Cafeteria Building, U.P. Visayas, Iloilo City Campus. All bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in any of the following forms and schedule:

Form of Bid Security	Minimum Amount in % of Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to be Bid
a) Cash, certified check, cashier's check, manager's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit	one percent (1%) of ABC
b) Bank Guarantee	one and a half percent (1-1/2%) of ABC

7. Request for clarification(s) on any part of the bidding documents and/or for an interpretation must be in writing and submitted to the BAC Secretariat at least Ten (10) calendar days before the deadline set for the submission and receipt of bids.

8. The University of the Philippines in the Visayas (UPV) reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids, and to cancel the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to contract award without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder(s).

9. The University of the Philippines in the Visayas (UPV) assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

10. Below is the address and contact persons/numbers of the BAC:
University of the Philippines in the Visayas
DR. CRISPINO A. SACLAUSO
Chair, Bids and Awards Committee
MS. ESTERLINA I. GAMEZ
Head, BAC Secretariat
New Administration Building, Miag-ao Campus
Telephone/Tel/Fax No. (033) 315-8141; (033) 338-1535 local 180
E-mail: upv_bacsec@yahoo.com
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(Sgd.) DR. CRISPINO A. SACLAUSO
Chair, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - January 18, 2007)

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
Operation and Maintenance of Various ACC's Air-Conditioning System
PB070102-LE0004/PR NO. SC0-06-000031196

1. The NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION, Head Office Region (TRANSCO-HO) through the 2006 Corporate Budget approved by the TransCo Board intends to apply the sum of P12,154,916.00 being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for PB070102-LE0004/PR NO. SC0-06-000031196, Operation and Maintenance of Various ACC's Air-Conditioning System. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening. Award shall be on a lot basis.

2. The TRANSCO-HO now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for Operation and Maintenance of Various ACC's Air-Conditioning System. Delivery of the GOODS is required within twelve (12) months from the receipt of the Approved Purchase Order/Contract. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.

3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

4. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below from January 19, 2007 to February 09, 2007 from 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of P1,000.00. The method of payment will be Cash. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

5. The TRANSCO-HO will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on January 31, 2007/10:00 A.M. at the address below.

6. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before February 12, 2007/10:00 A.M. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in any of the following forms and amount or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late Bids shall not be accepted.

Form of Security	Minimum Amount in % of Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid
1. Cash, certified check, cashier's check, manager's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit	One percent (1%) or P12,154,916.00
2. Bank guarantee	One and a half percent (1 1/2%) or P18,232,374.00
3. Surety Bond	Two and a half percent (2 1/2%) or P30,397,290.00
4. Foreign government guarantee	One hundred percent (100%) or P12,154,916.00

7. Bid opening shall be on February 12, 2007/10:00 A.M. at the Admin Conference Room same address below. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.

8. The National Transmission Corporation reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

National Transmission Corporation, Head Office Region
Mr. Armando N. Ochoa, BAC Chairman
MMD Office, G/F TransCo Main Bldg.
Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road,
Diliman Quezon City
Tel. No. (632) 9812205 / (632) 9812241
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(Sgd.) ARMANDO N. OCHOA
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - January 18, 2007)

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'Waiting list for diagnosis is one year'

From page A1

through the hospital's general clinics and then is referred to the pediatric department's subspecialty developmental clinic.

This unit screens and assesses children for possible developmental disorders, among them levels of autism and mental retardation. From 1990 until 2005, the clinic has offered its services for free to 15,928 children with developmental disability. Of them, 756 were diagnosed with ASD.

In the Philippines, only the PGH and the Philippine Children's Medical Center in Quezon City have government-subsidized developmental clinics, says Dr. Jeanne Mae Fortuna in her 15-year review of ASD patient admissions at the PGH.

Once a patient is diagnosed with autism, the doctor recommends treatment in the hospital's rehabilitation center or the UP's College of Allied Medical Professions. CAMP is a training center where speech, physical and occupational therapy interns attend to patients with different developmental disabilities under expert supervision.

Time of the essence

Problem is, patients may have to wait for at most a year to be seen by an expert for diagnosis, a "ridiculous" waiting time that Manalo says is being remedied by immediate referral to the subspecialty clinic for quick diagnosis.

"When you talk about autism or any childhood disability, time is of the essence. The earlier you intervene, the better the outcome because you are dealing with a developing brain. Young children develop in a matter of months and many changes can occur," says Manalo.

She says that autism patients should begin treatment as early as the age of two, otherwise it will be harder to "rewire" the brain as a child grows old.

"So to maximize, because that waiting list is really ridiculous, sometimes what we do is from the general clinics, if there is room in the subspecialty clinic, we just get patients with speech delay for immediate diagnosis," she says.

60-percent fallout rate

Manalo says the long queue has resulted in a fallout rate of 60 percent among patients who came for initial screening.

"Many on the list don't come because we don't have a secretary or nurse assigned to us to contact patients to remind them of their schedules. Of course, it's normal that people will forget if you are seen today, then you are scheduled for next year," she says.

To cope, the unit has resorted to less than ideal ways to attend to the patients. While those who can afford could pay for daily individual therapy sessions that cost between P500 and P600, PGH patients are scheduled once a week for group treatments.

"To manage the number of patients, we have ways that are not ideal like they are grouped, [therapy is] trans-disciplinary, we recommend a home program just so there is an intervention," she says.

Ideally, patients should be given one-on-one therapy over at least six months, a luxury at CAMP that has 230 patients, 49 of them autism cases. CAMP patients are seen on a weekly basis mostly in group sessions with multidisciplinary treatment combining speech, physical and occupational therapy.

The facility charges P50 per session, but this can be waived upon a barangay certification that the patient cannot afford it.

Home program

The home program is often recommended to families who cannot afford fare to go to CAMP, located

within UP Manila on Padre Faura Street, right across UP-PGH. But this is especially tricky for the less-privileged as it might take longer for parents to understand treatment procedure.

"Under the home program, the family has to follow steps, what they can do at home, but of course they have to be guided by a professional. And of course, what level of education do families we deal with have? They are at the low level so the home program is not that effective for them," Manalo says.

"It's better center-based, done by a professional, but for the family that can't afford fare, we give them home program and once a month, a professional checks on the patient, but it's not so effective. But the home program helps in that the family gets educated to understand the needs of the child," she says.

Only through therapy can an autism patient's cognitive level improve so they can graduate to special education classes, offered by government through the Department of Education's SpEd (special education) classes in public schools.

Committed mother best chance

With scant facilities grappling with the demands of a growing population of indigent autism patients, a supportive family, especially a committed mother, may be a patient's best chance.

"For me, in the most successful outcomes, the mothers are the team leaders: They know where to go, they are in touch, they are very involved in the intervention... Even if you don't have money, when the mother has maternal instinct and understanding, and the child is really of primary importance to you, you will be able to act as therapist," says Manalo.

"It takes patience and you are running after time. You cannot delay," she says.



VOLUNTEER MOTHERS of the Katipunan ng Mga Magulang ng mga Batang May Kapansanan in Mandaluyong City provide children with development disabilities with free literacy and therapy sessions at their center in Barangay Welfarville.

RYAN LIM

Volunteer Denver

From page A1

shanty and had sustained bruise. He would also eat dirt, scoop nearby canal, the mother recounted, 38, KMBK president who case of Denver in 2003.

The group was formed a decade ago in Mandaluyong who had a daughter with development problems. No facility for them or for the positions in the community and have one. They spend their own initiative. There are occasional donors.

The group runs a child program which was subsequently enrolled.

Denver went there occasionally because Denver's needs call to all the time, he is still tied to mother who had to scour the city for support her six children. Denver on drug charges.

Knocking on doors

Gonzales and her volunteers go around the city, knocking on doors of children with development disabilities to the center at Barangay Welfarville for free literacy and therapy sessions.

They have so far monitored children with disabilities—about 60 in all—11 of the 21 children from autism—in 11 of the 21 city. Most of them are from poor families not afford expensive therapy sessions.

Sharp rise noted in SpEd students

From page A1

only have educators but also doctors, therapists and parents of children with autism," Camara says.

UP's Special Education program reaches out to children with development delays, such as autism, cerebral palsy and attention deficit disorders, those with traditional visual impairment, as well as juvenile delinquents.

The increase in enrollees isn't solely because of a great demand—with astronomical salaries—for SpEd teachers in the United States.

Growing awareness

Camara, one of the pioneering experts in the field, credits the enrollment phenomenon to a nobler reason: With more and more special children born, there is a growing awareness and acceptance of autism and other similar deficiencies in the country.

"It is a challenge... but it is also an achievement to be able to help these children with difficulties to learn," Camara says.

Another expert says that while SpEd as a field is still in its infant stages, the Philippines has already developed a good cadre of caregivers and teachers.

givers and teachers.

"We are not behind in ideas, implementation and programs," says Ma. Therese Macapagal, executive director of Cupertino Center for Special Children at La Vista, Quezon City.

Programs adopted from West

Programs have been adopted from those developed mainly in the United States, Britain and Australia. Macapagal says the Philippine programs are more advanced than those in Japan, although the Japanese have better facilities.

But Macapagal, who is also a senior professor at Miriam College Graduate School, laments that many SpEd graduates go to the United States each year, citing figures ranging from 50 to 90 percent, because of high salaries.

The state university, which began offering SpEd as a course in the 1950s and became a degree program in 1966, is focusing on "building an indigenous academic base for autism."

Camara has coauthored with fellow UP professor, Dr. Edilberto Dizon, a book titled "Teaching Filipino

Children with Autism," which is being used by the Department of Education (DepEd), as well as children with autism.

The UP SpEd area also teaches materials.

Studies on coping

The studies and research on SpEd graduate students and children with autism and other disabilities are also invaluable in understanding this disorder and coping mechanisms.

The studies range from Filipino single parents—mostly of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs)—with autistic children cope with difficulties to the experience of having a transition for young adults with disabilities.

But it is UP SpEd's mobile program, in partnership with DepEd and the private sector, Camara considers a most worthy of promoting special education.

"We are not letting the children though we are loaded in teaching work in UP," she says.

Sourcing of partnership funding for the training program.

Shangri-La's Mactan Island Resort

By Jhunnex Napallacan

Inquirer Visayas
and Nikko Dizon
in Manila

THE SHANGRI-LA'S MACTAN ISLAND Resort dismissed as a rumor a report that a staffer of the Indonesian president had asked a hotel manager to mark up the expenses of the delegation to the 12th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) Summit and split the profit with hotel employees.

But Sharon Samarista, Shangri-La's Mactan director for communications, said she would have to investigate the report "because it's out in the news."

"Definitely, I have not heard of such [an attempt to pad the expenses of the Indonesian delegation]," Samarista said in an interview over dylA.

She confirmed that the Indonesian delegation stayed in the hotel.

"They stayed here, but there was no request at all. None that I heard of," she said.

The wire report said a hotel manager refused the request.

"We do not mark up whatever contracts we have made with each of the countries. The rates were finalized and negotiated by the Philippine government through the (12th Asean Summit) national organizing committee," Samarista said.

Hard to prove

Victoriano Lecaros, spokesperson of the summit, expressed doubt that an Indonesian official had tried to get a hotel manager to mark up the delegation's expenses and split the profit between them.

"It's kind of hard to believe that a certain official would take the whole package. That would be easy to say

but hard to prove," he said.

"Just like here, a cash payment given in your name and when you go home, you have to liquidate the expenses individually," said Samarista, who is also the Philippine ambassador to Malaysia.

No need for probe

He said the Philippines would not even investigate, adding that such an allegation does not dampen the success of the Asean Summit.

"It's not worth our time when asked if the Philippines, host country, would conduct an investigation."

"We have our plates full with the outcome of the summit," he said.

Lecaros pointed out that the allegation was true. It was not a Filipino.

Indon exec in Asean summit accused

From page A1

charged to the Indonesian presidential party and offered to split the profit with the hotel's employees, the newspaper said, quoting hotel sources. (Shangri-La's rejoinder above.)

"A delegation member came and asked the hotel manager to increase the total expenses that the Indonesian delegation had to pay," a source with the hotel's operational affairs told The Jakarta Post.

The manager rejected the request and suggested that the official not humiliate Indonesia further.

Only Indonesia

"Instead of backing off, the staff offered the manager 40 percent of the margin. But the manager insisted on rejecting the offer," the source said.

The room rate at the Shangri-La is between \$250 and \$400 a night.

The manager said that while delegations from Cambodia and Laos, much poorer countries than Indonesia, were attending the summit, only Indonesia's staff had attempted to bribe the hotel, according to the Post.

More than 100 people, including several journalists, were part of Yudhoyono's contingent. Yudhoyono regularly travels abroad with a large staff.

"I know nothing about this," the Indonesian president's spokesperson Andi Mallarangeng told Agence France Presse.

He only said that all delegations to the summit, including the Indonesians, stayed at the same hotel.

Theo Sambuaga, who heads the

parliamentary commission on defense, foreign affairs and international relations, said the report needed investigation to prevent the image from being further tarnished.

"I will ask the government to thoroughly investigate this report. It turns out to be true, to action against those guilty of such shameful incident. I repeat itself in the future," he told AFP.

Tip of iceberg

Teten Masduki, Indonesian corruption watchdog coordinator, described the incident as a "tip of the iceberg" for Indonesia's corruption problem.

He said marking up travel expenses had become the culture

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for junk to sell to
s father is in jail

"There are a lot of parents who have not yet ac-
cepted the condition of their children. Feeling
ashamed, they would rather lock their children
inside their homes instead of seeking help," says
Gonzales' husband Dicky, 45, who also helps the
group. He works as a bookkeeper and moonlights
as a driver in a valet service.

Most of the time, parents tell the volunteers
they are too busy eking out a living to bring their
children to the center. There are parents, though,
who prefer to play card games, says Gonzales.

Children who agree to go to the center are fetched,
given hourlong therapy sessions and basic literacy
lessons. The center also provides free home therapy
sessions.

Thanks to the city government, the volunteer moth-
ers have undergone seminars on how to take care of
children with disabilities, skills they are also applying to
their own children.

Charlie Barberan, 31, one of
the volunteers who is also
chapter president of the Autism
Society of the Philippines, says
she has an 8-year-old son, Jian,
who is autistic.

Her life was shattered
when she learned about the
condition of her son. She had
hoped her first born would
become a policeman, like her
husband. "I was very disap-
pointed," Barberan says.

There were also times she

Students at UP

which is be-
nt of Edu-
parents of
produces

undertaken by the private Philippine
Foundation for the Rehabilitation of
Disabled Persons Inc. (PFRD).

This week, teachers in Marikina
will participate in UP SpEd's mobile
training program, the 28th to be un-
dertaken since it began in 1994.

Commitment

The mobile training program has
been to Davao, Cotabato, Pangasi-
nan, Benguet and Cagayan, among
other places.

"Our participants are SpEd teach-
ers who attend for updating, as well
as regular teachers who find them-
selves handling autistic children,"
Camara says.

The weeklong session covers vari-
ous topics—from identifying autism
to preparing a curriculum to teach-
ing adapted Physical Education.

Ultimately, Camara says, it is peo-
ple with tremendous commitment
and dedication who become effec-
tive SpEd teachers.

"It is extremely difficult to teach
children with autism. You must have
the expertise, the commitment, and
the kind of personality that would
enable you to deal with the chal-
lenge," she says.

denies report

"The matter would have to be be-
tween the delegate of that country
and his or her government," Lecaros
said.

Complimentary rooms

Complimentary hotel rooms and
vehicles were provided by the Philip-
pine government only to the ranking
officials of Asean member countries
during the recently concluded Asean
summit.

These included the head of state,
the foreign minister, the trade or se-
nior economic official, and at least
two Asean director generals.

"It is how it's done in any interna-
tional meet. The rest of each coun-
try's delegation would pay their own
way," said Lecaros.

The summit, held from Jan. 12 to
Jan. 15, gathered heads of state
from 10 Asean members and three
dialogue partners.

cused of graft

government officials in Indonesia.
"It's like exposing Indonesia's preva-
lent corruption to the international
community. But we must admit that it
is a public secret that most officials do
markups when traveling abroad or out
of town," Teten told the Post.

He said the audit system for travel
expenses needed to be improved to
enable it to track and counter such
practices.

Indonesia has an endemic corrup-
tion problem. It tied with Zimbabwe
as the 130th most corrupt nation out
of 163 countries in the 2006 global
rankings issued by the anticorruption
watchdog Transparency Interna-
tional.

The country was ranked 137 out
of 158 nations in the previous year's
report. With reports from AFP and
Jakarta Post

ended up spanking her son when he got too rowdy. But
her love for him was stronger than ignorance and she
and her husband soon started looking for answers to
her questions, finding them in the Katipunan center.

"We did not lose hope. We wanted to improve
the future of our son. We did not give up on him,"
Barberan says.

Jian still avoids eye contact and still suddenly
blurts out a cry—general manifestations of a child af-
fected by autism. But he can now easily express him-
self and even occasionally crack some jokes. He is al-
so good in painting and he can now read books.

He goes to a school for special children and
ranks high in his class, says Barberan.

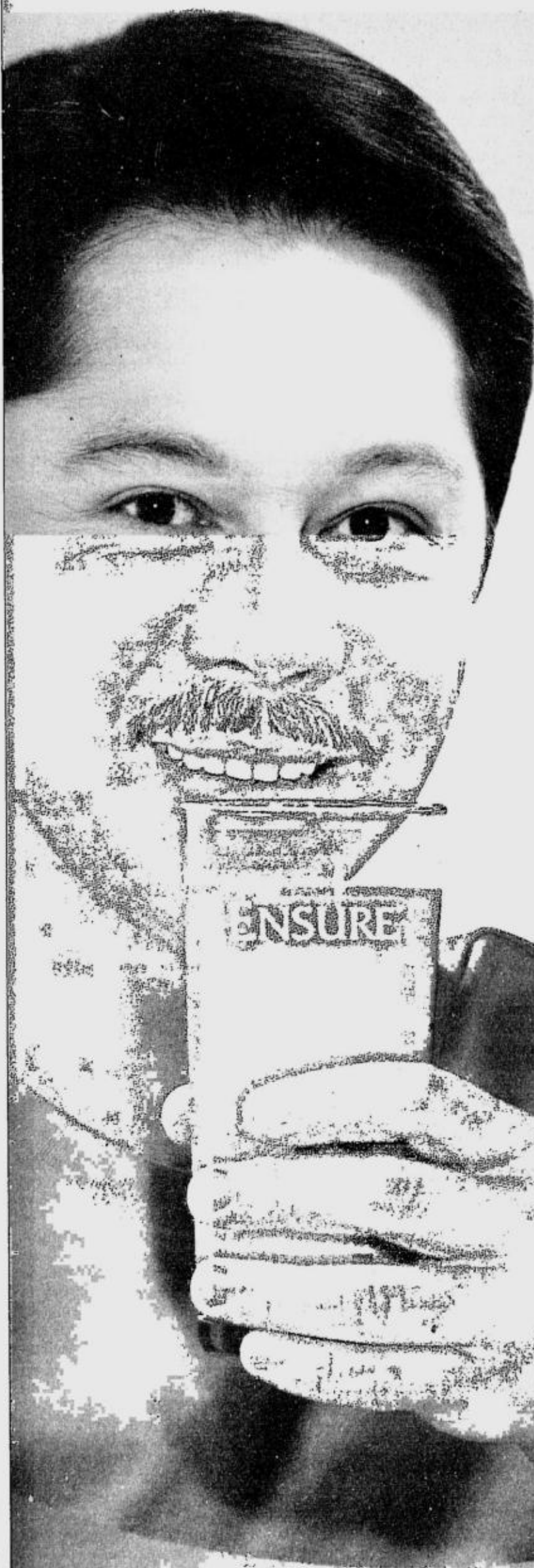
"Jian is proof that children with autism, if given
the proper training and attention early on, can still
grow up well. We may be poor, but I can say I did ev-
erything I could do for my son," says Barberan.



WHAT'S COOKING? Five boys handpicked from the Center for Autism and Related Disorder are being trained for the center's bakeshop set to open later this year in Las Piñas which will also provide "pan de sal" to poor children in the area.

ROGER MARGALLO

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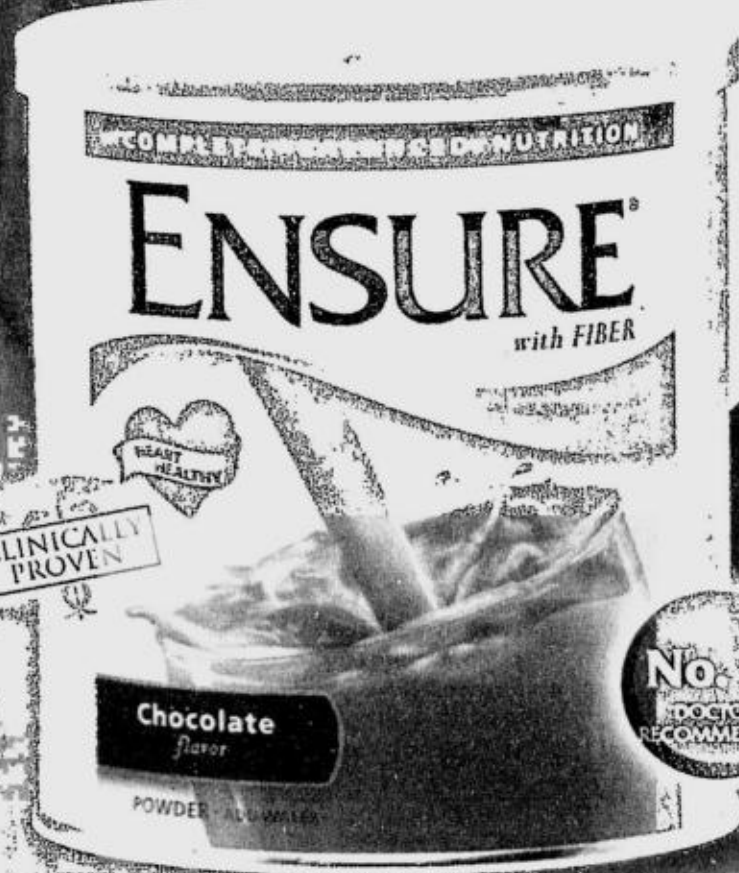
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WITHIN A FEW MONTHS, ALL DIESEL FUELS IN the local market will contain at least one percent biodiesel. At about the same time as biodiesel use rises to 2 percent—in about two years' time—all gasoline products will have 5 percent bioethanol, and the mixture will rise to 10 percent bioethanol four years later. Farther down the road, Philippine energy officials see an 85-percent bioethanol blend being sold and used—not only in the Philippines but in all of Asia.

EDITORIAL

Is it all a pipe dream? That part about Asia getting together to reverse its traditional dependence on imported oil and relying more on biofuels to make vehicles and industry run may take a while to come true, but the more modest Philippine goals are well within reach. In fact, they have to be done, for that is what the law says.

What was touted as the fuel of the future just about a year ago is soon to become the energy of the present to a significant degree. The Biofuels Act, which President Macapagal-Arroyo signed without fanfare last week, guarantees a captive market for bioethanol and biodiesel by making the blending mandatory. Based on the country's oil import bill of \$4.1 billion in 2005, that market for biofuels could expand to \$400 million before the decade is over.

The new law also throws in a number of sweeteners like tax breaks and financial assistance from government financial institution not only for the production of biofuels but also for related activities like the planting of sugar, coconut and other biofuel-producing plants like jatropha.

What should give added push to the developing industry is the heightened interest of Asia's biggest energy users, like China and Japan, in promoting the use of biofuels. The East Asia Summit early this week (held after the Asean Summit) came up with the Cebu Declaration of East Asian Energy Security which calls for the adoption of measures to improve energy efficiency and reduce dependence on fossil fuels. The declaration—signed by the leaders of the 10-member Asean, Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea—urges member-countries to expand the development of biofuels and other sources of renewable energy.

Japan went a step farther by unveiling a \$2-billion package to help Asian nations develop energy-saving technology and reduce the region's dependence on oil. The package includes the training of 1,500 engineers and researchers on energy saving technology, as well as research on biofuels.

China, on the other hand, announced that it is financing five ethanol projects in the Philippines, including one plant that will produce 150,000 liters of ethanol per day. Another project involves the development of 40,000 hectares to be planted to cassava and sugar for the production of ethanol which will be exported to China.

All the elements seem to be coming together for the country's initial venture into the production of biofuels: region-wide interest, a big market eager to buy the product, substantial financing for training and research, foreign and local investments. Before all this, Brazil already had a well-developed technology on ethanol production that only needed to be copied. There was the spike in crude oil prices that forced countries with no oil fields to give a hard look at alternative fuels. And there's the growing concern over the worsening global warming caused in large part by the unrestrained use of fossil fuels.

The motives, the methods and the means are all there for a successful biofuels program. It would be unforgivable for the government and the private sector to let this opportunity slip away.

Real battle

CAN SOMETHING USEFUL COME OUT FROM THE OBSCENE spectacle of Saddam Hussein's hanging? Maybe. We have been once again confronted with the old issue of the death penalty for defeated torturers—thanks to the brutality of modern means of communication.

FOREIGN COMMENT

Those who have the duty to manage justice cannot lower themselves to the level of the criminal, whether or not he is a former tyrant. The real battle is one...of principles, with the double aim to encourage the evolution of conscience and multiply those international courts that do not use the gallows.

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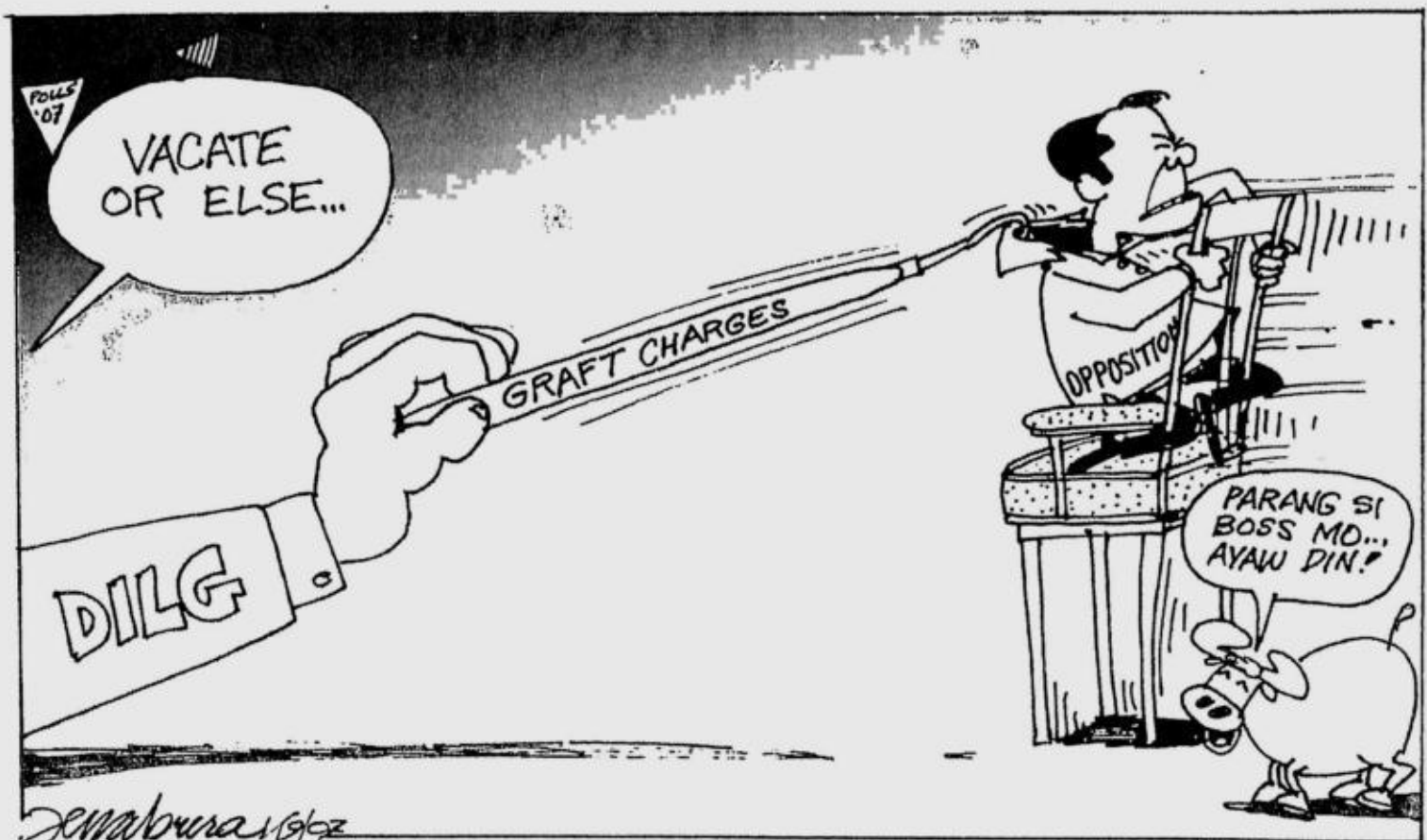
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Rear-bumper gauges

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado



roads or building high-cost systems such as rail-based metros," WRI notes.

WRI indicators cover access, safety, environment, economic and social sustainability, and governance. They're designed to help cities un-snarl gridlocks. The need is for "more environmentally sustainable modes, such as non-motorized transport and lower-cost bus systems."

"But ever increasing cars fill the ever increasing space," Sunita Narain snaps in the "Economics of Congestion." In the West, the car replaced the bus or bicycle. "But in our world, it only marginalized space."

In Asian cities, cars and two-wheelers carry less than 20 percent of commuters. Buses, bicycles, etc. transport the rest. But cars and motorcycles occupy over 90 percent of the road space in the cities. The beneficiaries of the road, flyover or elevated highway are those in cars or astride motorcycles.

Aside from ill health stemming from pollution and congestion's cost in time, fuel etc., there are glossed over bills, Narain claims. These include: a) cost of the road; b) maintaining and policing it; and c) expense for space.

You need 23 square meters to park a car but only 15 to install a desk in your office. "The one million-odd cars in Delhi take up 11 percent of the city's urban area." Cities should charge fees that reflect the real cost of roads. Narain adds: "Ultimately, the issue is not even what it costs... but why we are not estimating the losses."

There are estimates and estimates. And their conclusions vary from the perspectives. Thai economists figure congestion lops 6 percent off Bangkok's economic production. A Na-

tional Center for Transportation Studies tally for Philippine traffic congestion losses came to P100 billion. But that's skewed whenever the price of oil bolts from \$48 a barrel to \$65.

Asean lost \$11 billion in 2000 due to the 73,000 road deaths and 1.8 million injuries, says Asian Development Bank. Police in the Philippines and Indonesia underreport fatalities in these "mean streets." And traffic agencies are notably lax. Possession of a driver's license here does not guarantee the holder knows how to drive.

Air pollution in Asia's worst-affected cities is five to six times the levels considered safe by the World Health Organization. Outdoor air pollution causes 530,000 premature deaths in Asia. "TSP" or total suspended particulates, breach WHO's safety benchmarks five fold in places like Metro Manila. The microscopic dust embeds itself in the lung and causes respiratory disease, cancer and other ailments.

"Lead emissions result in a significant loss of cognitive capacity among children." That's scientific jargon for dumbing down kids. The mental capacity of children constantly gassed by smoke-belchers is crimped. "Your elevators don't go to the top floor" is a taunt that'll be tossed at them as they grow up.

There are success stories too. Bangkok cut pollution levels by half, over a decade, by clamping higher taxes on "tuk-tuks"—two-stroke tricycles that were among the heaviest polluters. Singaporeans must bid for the right to buy cars. Traffic in the central district is restricted during peak hours and public transport is extensive.

"Partial calculations have limitations," notes the book: "Emerging Asia—Changes and Challenges." "But they place the real costs of congestion in perspective (for) many policymakers who remain unaware of the full extent of the problem."

The election season has started. This guarantees that our policymakers won't look at those "rear-bumper gauges" anytime soon.

(E-mail: juanlmercado@gmail.com)

Cautionary tale

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros



Actor. Well, it's another lesson to people who like to make remakes. If you're going to do one, remake a bad movie, not a classic. In the first, you have nowhere to go but up, and in the second, you have nowhere to go but down.

What I did was watch the two movies one after the other, the 1949 first and the 2006 second. The latter does pale in comparison, which is not a little ironic in that the first is black and white and the second full color. Looking at it now, the 1949 version seems a little simplistic, a good man wanting to do right by his fellows driven to seek power to accomplish it and succumbing to its corruptive influence. Indeed reaching heights of megalomaniacal ambition and corrupting everyone around him in turn. But its very "simplicity-ness," its depiction of the problem in relentless black and white, is its own strength. Broderick Crawford in particular has the raw power and physical size to carry it off.

The 2006 version goes for subtler shades but succeeds not in being subtle but in being diffused. It's on Penn's shoulders the movie's ability to command suspension of disbelief falls, and alas, Penn's normally sturdy shoulders cannot support the weight. As one critic pointed out, Penn is better given to playing introspective characters with all their nuances than extroverted—indeed as in this case charismatically bombastic—ones in all their primary colors.

"All The King's Men" tells the story of Willie Stark, a self-made, small-town crusader, who, unable to buck City Hall's shenanigans merely by exposing them, decides to fight it at its own game by joining politics. He succeeds marvelously, drawing fellow hicks to his camp by

empathy and solidarity. His success becomes his undoing, driving him to do good by the ways of bad, to give to the people by the ways of *trapo* politics. In the 1949 version at least, that proposition is spelled out in, well, black and white: Good can come from bad. Or indeed more than that, good can't come from anything else but bad. But as the movie spells out also in black and white, you start thinking that way, you'll reach a point where you won't be able to tell black from white, good from bad, anymore.

It's a theme that has more resonance to us today than to Americans, which I suspect is also one of the reasons the new version didn't go over well with the audiences, apart from the critics. Of particular interest to me is the character of the narrator, Jack Burden, a journalist played in the original by John Ireland and in the remake by Jude Law. Coming from an elite family, though one whose fortunes had tremendously declined, and full of lofty sentiment, he's the one who catapults Stark to fame by writing about him in a newspaper. He subsequently joins him after Stark becomes governor, only to have his idealism peeled off from him layer after layer, principle after principle, compelling him to betray friend and family. Compelling him, that is, in one sense: He finds he no longer has the will to resist.

It's a cautionary tale, and one I would particularly recommend to those as yet untouched by today's pervasive corruption. Jack Burden's fate I've seen happen abundantly to ex-activists and ex-friends, and I don't know that I'm being entirely cynical when I say I won't bother to recommend it to them. It won't help greatly to wrench them from where they are. But for the rest of you, well, you can do worse by spending four hours singing karaoke.

Meanwhile, I'm glad to report that I am re-joining (reveling might suggest a recidivist return to dissipation) in being able to move about again. To those who keep offering to teach me to dance, please know that my ambitions lie entirely in being able to walk.

For the country

POLITICAL
TIDBITSBelinda
Olivares-Cunanan

WHEN THE ASEAN AND EAST ASIAN SUMMITS were postponed last December, among those who regretted the decision was the Japanese delegation, which was looking forward to a dialogue with China and South Korea on mutual concerns, such as the nuclear build-up in North Korea and sentiments in China and Korea against the visit of the Japanese prime minister to the Yashukuni war shrine in Tokyo. When Prime Minister Shinzo Abe assumed office, among the first things he did was to travel to Beijing and Seoul. But the leaders of the three countries had not met for three years and, in the meantime, relations between Japan and the two countries had become strained.

Finally, in Cebu, the summit took place just hours after the leaders flew in. First, Abe and Chinese PM Wen Jiabao conferred, and then Abe and South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun. Then all three met together. The Cebu East Asian Summit was indeed historic and it is hoped that the three countries will become closer from hereon.

Just before the summit, Abe made a very hectic four-day swing across Europe, visiting one city a day—London, Berlin, Brussels and Paris—to confer with his counterparts. On the fifth day he flew to Cebu. But because he's young (52), he was able to keep up with the tight schedule in Cebu. It must also be noted that all the Asean and East Asia Summit leaders came, despite repeated warnings of terrorist threats. This showed great confidence in the stability of the Philippines as host.

I covered the events in Cebu and was able to cull some recollections from some people. Running through their accounts was the common desire to put the country in a very good light. Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye recounted that at the airport, a Malaysian who accompanied the genial Prime Minister Badawi to Cebu told Bunye about how helpful a Filipino attendant at the hotel had been. When the Malaysian commended him, the hotel employee replied, "I'm doing it for our country, because you're our guest."

Last Friday evening at the Cebu International Convention Center (CICC), President Macapa-

gal-Arroyo welcomed the foreign dignitaries as they arrived for the first Asean working dinner. Welcomers in native costumes lined up the driveway and some were perched on the rooftop, waving the flags of participating countries. The weather was awful and rain began to pour, but the welcomers outside stayed in their places. When GMA noticed what was happening, she quickly told protocol officer Ralph Pangani-ban to ask the welcomers to take shelter.

It was a fantastic coup to have enticed our beauty-tide holders to model fashion czar Pitoy Moreno's Asian-inspired gowns during the gala dinner last Sunday night. The foreigners marvelled at how the beauty queens from the 1960s and 1970s, such as Gemma Araneta-Cruz, Gloria Diaz, Margie Moran and Evangeline Pascual, remained ravishing until now. I sat beside Hiroshige Seko, a special adviser to the Japanese prime minister, and he gasped when he realized he was just 2 years old when a beauty queen won her world title and she still looked gorgeous after 43 years! A huge screen at the center of the stage of the gigantic tent built on Mactan Shangri-La grounds and two smaller screens at the sides showed off all the beauty queens' good looks. The guests noted the fetching mixed racial strains in them.

Later, former President Fidel V. Ramos, who sat between Ms Ming Ramos and Aike Abe, the 43-year-old wife of the Japanese prime minister, at the VIPs' long table fronting the stage, told me that the foreign guest also marveled at the timelessness of the Filipino beauties. FVR gallantly told the prime minister's wife that one beauty secret of theirs was their use of Japanese beauty products, such as Shiseido. That drew a laugh from the visitor.

FVR was part of the Eminent Persons Group tasked to draft the proposed Asean Charter supposedly along more democratic lines. At the dinner, I congratulated him on this new role. He quipped that henceforth, he should be addressed as "Your Eminence."

A total of 95 participants in the gala dinner's cultural show were downed by spoiled food they had probably taken the night before. They were rushed to the hospital early Sunday morning. But very few people know the spunk and the show-must-go-on spirit these young people displayed. For instance, a favorite number in the Bayanihan Dance Company's repertoire is called "Bangko," wherein a male dancer nimbly pulls a lithe female dancer by the hand up and down various benches piled on top of each other. Robbie Manayan is the male lead dancer for this number, but he was hospitalized along with the rest of the dancers. That evening, he had to get a cab from the hospital to Mactan and walk part of the way since the road was blocked. But the way he danced "Bangko," no one would have guessed what he had gone through.

There's also the Bayanihan's colorful "Vinta Singkil" number where two groups of boys run while pulling two sets of bamboo poles on their shoulders. Dancing on those poles are two females, and the illusion is created of vintas sailing in the wind. One of the two female dancers, Janice Albore, was also stricken and Bayanihan executive director Susie Benitez thought of having just one vinta, but it wouldn't have had the same impact. Janice had to dance atop the pole and keep her balance despite her weakened condition and she came through with flying colors. But Bayanihan had to rush to Cebu four male dancers, two female dancers and two musicians to replace those who couldn't rise from their sickbed, while those who went on with the show had to return to the hospital.

Gerard Salonga, who conducted the Peace Philharmonic Philippines orchestra, also sick because of the spoiled food, but he still managed to get the job done with verve. For everyone, the show had to go on—*por la patria*.

An inconvenient truth

ALL THE ASEAN HEADS OF STATE AND THEIR ministers who came for the recent Asean summit in Cebu were gathered in one dark room for 100 minutes, listening to former US Vice President Al Gore in the documentary "An Inconvenient Truth." Each one had a bucket of popcorn. And when it was over they all stood up, their faces flushed because they all felt a sudden energy surge. They all went out the door, walking briskly, ready to take on the world with great resolve.

Wishful thinking. That was a what-if scenario that was running like a sidebar frame in my mind while I was watching the movie-doc the other day. (They did sign something on promoting non-polluting sources of energy.)

Documentaries are going mainstream—"The March of the Penguins" among the latest—and are relatively well-received. Is this a shift? There have been too many big-budget fantasies in the last few years and their success could mean more are coming. They portray the good-versus-evil themes of real life, but because they're fantasy, we know for sure that good will triumph over evil after we've sat it out for three sensorious hours or after three years of waiting for a trilogy to run its course. And then we say that everything will be all right.

Not if you watch "An Inconvenient Truth" (directed by Davis Guggenheim). Everything will not be all right if we do not do something to reverse global warming. The movie is a global warning. It's not doomsday reel fiction like "Soylent Green," it's real life on Planet Earth right now. And we, its inhabitants, are to blame for what's happening.

But do enjoy your popcorn. When Greenpeace-Philippines sponsored a premiere showing, the free tickets came with a warning: "If the vast majority of the world's scientists are right, we have just 10 years to avert a major catastrophe that could send our entire planet into a tailspin of epic destruction involving extreme weather, floods, droughts, epidemics and killer heat waves—all beyond anything we have ever experienced."

This inconvenient truth is showing now but only

HUMAN
FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo



at SM Megamall's Cinema 7. I hope today is not its last day. If you fail to catch it, get hold of a DVD. Someone told me you could watch it in YouTube. The producers are not after big bucks and would like you to spread the bad news—and also tell others about the good that each one of us can do.

Gore's role as the presenter was tailor-made for him. He was not picked because of his looks or for being an almost-President. Global warming is a problem he's been studying and speaking about every chance he's got for many years.

"We have everything we need to know," Gore starts off. Don't be turned off by the beginning scene that shows him on a platform lecturing before an audience in a darkened hall. (It looks elegant, in fact.) He shows on screen the familiar "Earthrise" photo taken from space by astronauts more than 30 years ago. It is breathtaking.

The next photographs are alarming. Behold snow caps vanishing, shorelines retreating, oceans widening, lakes shrinking. These are recent images from outer space.

Zoom in to terra firma. The awesome glaciers are melting, wildlife are moving to new habitats, species are disappearing. Hurricanes are getting fiercer, seas warmer, rainfall heavier. The footage of a distressed polar bear trying to hang on to a melting ice floe will break your heart.

Just as alarming are the scientific data, the jagged line charts that go up and down and up and up. The 10 warmest years ever recorded in history were in the last 14 years with India experiencing 50 degree Celsius. Global warming is no longer "a debate." It is real.

We saw the alternative

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III



fully knows the only way the President, like Charlton Heston, would relinquish office is if you pried it out of her cold, dead hands; or she is impeached. The public, though, has at least expressed opposition to some of the tactics the President has used to keep herself in power, and is pretty firm on not tolerating her in office past June 30, 2010.

But that being the case, if the assumption is that the President has been given a new lease on political life, still, it means that her political career has an expiration date: the end of the term she began in 2004. In which case, the coming May election is not about alternatives to her, per se. It is not even all that much about surveying the horizon for her eventual successor in 2010. It is about the composition of Congress, and whether the 14th Congress will be as disgraceful as the 13th was.

What made the 13th Congress the most disreputable in our history, worse than the first post-war Congress which voted itself a backpay for services never rendered during the Japanese Occupation, and which instituted congressional allowances (which hadn't even entered the minds of prewar legislators) as a means of augmenting their salaries?

The first was the House of Representatives' belief in three things: that politics is only a "numbers game"; that the national interest is identical with their parochial political well-being; that the House must be subservient to the Palace and exists only to collect patronage from it.

The second was the Senate's insistence, validated by the Supreme Court, that investigations are an essential function, and the reminder from the public

that such investigations shouldn't come at the expense of its lawmaking duties; and a reminder that for all its defects, the country was slightly better off with a lackluster, but hard-headed, Senate than with being at the mercies of a pushover and mercenary House.

Forty years ago, in the November 1967 elections, a senatorial candidate achieved third place even though he was dead: Gaudencio Antonino. He ran on the issue of opposing increases in congressional allowances, and he opposed the proposal from congressmen to allow themselves to simultaneously sit as constitutional convention delegates. His opposition resulted in his being expelled from the administration Nacionalista Party, and in his running as an independent.

Antonino explained to the Philippines Free Press why he had to run: "I don't have to win," he said. "If I get a million and a half votes running on the issue of congressional allowances and running alone, congressmen will know how strong is the sentiment against congressional allowances. Imagine if I got more than two million votes, would they dare vote themselves their old allowances? But if I don't run, then the congressional allowances issue will be dead and they will vote themselves all kinds of allowances, in the Senate as well as in the House, without fear of the people's anger. The issue will be politically dead with me."

What does this have to do with the UNO slate? Take a look at the administration slate. It's in an even more embryonic stage than the opposition's. If the opposition can be faulted for at times being reckless in confronting the administration, then the Palace deserves criticism for overreaching its powers time and again. That we aren't a unicameral, pseudoparliamentary, one-party regime under the leadership of a president-for-life (which is never a good thing, regardless of the leader), it's not for want of an administration trying. The gambits failed because the opposition did its job, with very little by way of credibility or resources.

In a word, it's been responsive, and even responsible than the alternative, which was Con-ass.

Gone soon

NO, THEY DON'T KNOW IT YET. THEY DON'T EVEN HAVE A clue. I am afraid to tell them but I'll let them know, so they can prepare for it: I am leaving soon.

Right now, I am busy winding up my business, putting everything in order, and trying to devise a system to make it easier for them when I'm gone. I don't want them to get lost in a jungle of files and trash.

No, I am not terminally ill, but it sure feels like I am. Office work is beginning to bore me—same routine, same tasks, same people to deal with, same questions to ask, same annoying habits to cope with. Nothing new. Nothing exciting.

It was this repetitive cycle that tore me inside and caused my disease.

This is my first job out of college. I started last September, and I immediately became part of the family (a ragtag crew of 16 people) and grew to love them. Suddenly, I was someone's *bunso*, someone else's *ampon* (adopted daughter), and another's "daughter-in-law." I gained friends, mentors and *ka-alaskahans*.

Listening to them discuss what a brighter future awaits the agency hurts a lot because I know that in a few weeks, I will no longer be with them. It's heartbreaking.

But like a person inflicted with a terminal disease, I just have to go. I need to go. The call of writing is getting louder and louder to ignore, and if I don't heed it now, I might get deaf soon. I have to move on and pursue my dreams.

When I'm gone, I hope that they will remember me. I'll drop by once in a while, but I wish they won't be surprised and stare at me as if I am a ghost.

With my journey to purgatory getting near, I feel nervous. But I also feel excited to be back in the market where bums like me are waiting. Hopefully, the Master will reincarnate me into someone who gets the front seat in the movies of life and watch history as it happens. Whatever it is, I am looking forward to my "next life" where I know I'll be happier.

Approximately six hours ago, I submitted my resignation letter only to have it sent back. My manager (she's not exactly a manager, but I refuse to call her "boss" because she's more than that) rejected my resignation and asked me to stay for another month so I can think about it some more. I accepted her offer. One month won't hurt that much, I told myself. What I fear is that the longer I stay, the stronger the attachment will get. Then, it will be harder for me to leave.

The doctor might have made the wrong prognosis. I might have another month to live after all, another month of agony and suffering, another month with the family. The family decided to put me on a life-saving device, but they will have to perform euthanasia afterwards. They have to let me go soon.

I'll be cherishing the few weeks I will have with them, while I wait patiently to taste my sweet death—and finally, my reincarnation.

Aireen Keith S. Macalalad, 21, is a mass communication graduate of Angeles University Foundation.

Diverted

Anne Jillian A. Dumanat

IT WAS NEITHER SCARY NOR CONFUSING. TO ME, IT WAS just irritating that our plane had to be diverted to another airport.

It happened on a Wednesday. Gulf Air Flight 154 from Bahrain was already a little bit delayed. I thought that everything was going smoothly despite the delay. We even had the predictable dish of overcooked pasta plus either chicken or beef. That was until we had to land.

When the seatbelt sign began to flash and the flight attendants began checking, I thought we would be landing in 10 or 15 minutes.

It started to circle around Metro Manila. Ten minutes, and then 15. I leaned over to my sister and said there must be some problems with the traffic down at the Naia.

The passengers were becoming impatient. Some got up to go to the lavatory, and the flight attendants had to tell them to go back to their seats. I was getting annoyed by their stubbornness.

The captain finally told us that because the President was leaving, the runways had to be closed temporarily to other air traffic and so we had to proceed to Clark Air Base in Pampanga to refuel.

I have to admit the announcement got me a little bit excited. I had never been to Clark and the sight along the way was amazing. It was the first time I saw where the lahar flowed more than a decade ago.

We landed safely, but we were made to stay onboard the aircraft as it refueled. My only complaint at this point was that it was quite hot (a reminder that we were no longer in wintry Bahrain). Some passengers seated across the aisle were becoming noisy. One woman kept saying that Gulf Air ought to pay for her ride home from the airport. I had to suppress the urge to remind her that airlines only have the responsibility to bring their clients to their destination. She kept at it until the captain announced that we were returning to Manila.

The flight attendants handed out water and soft drinks. A number of passengers let others borrow their phones so they could inform their relatives about what was happening. Others kept people entertained.

After an hour, we landed safely at Naia. I had no idea we were on a plane that was officially classified as a "missing plane." After all, we were landing in the middle of the afternoon, not in the wee hours of the morning. What I didn't like especially was that the runway was closed because the President was going to fly somewhere to attend a wedding. If it had been state business, perhaps I wouldn't have minded the delay, but it was not state business.

I know Ms President should be protected at all times against assassination attempts and the likes. But I also realize that if a plane needs to refuel, the situation is critical.

Am I angry? No, I'm not, but I think that it is time we evaluated our priorities. After all, that plane was filled with people, including many whom we hail as heroes.

Anne Jillian A. Dumanat, 20, is studying materials engineering at the University of the Philippines in Diliman.

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Patients must not be made to fund PGH's upgrade

MAY I COMMENT ON NEWS REPORTS that the Philippine General Hospital is going to increase room rates and other fees. The PGH administration said that it needs the additional revenues to upgrade its facilities. So, the sick who cannot afford the new rates will not be able to avail themselves of the hospital's services.

The PGH is a public facility. Therefore,

Issue of ancestral domain should not be a big stumbling block to peace

AFP CHIEF GEN. HERMOGENES ESPERON came to town recently and declared that the elusive peace pact between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front was expected to be signed in March or April this year.

We admire his optimism but we do not share his views on why the truce will suddenly come to a happy ending this quarter. The MILF has the reputation of agreeing on one thing and then dissenting on another, which makes the talks a protracted process.

Take the issue of ancestral domain. It could have been the least contentious, yet it became the biggest stumbling block in the talks. The MILF has steadfastly stonewalled the realities on the ground. Contrary to what is being bruited about, there is so much land that remains in the domain of the Moro royalty. These are vast territories that have remained idle, uncultivated and unproductive. Claims to ancestral domain cannot bring back ancient history; if this were to be, then only the endemic and indigenous peoples (IPs) in the region have the right to the ancestral domain.

To their credit, however, the IPs respect the Indigenous Peoples Republic Act (IPRA) which is in place and in full force. The IPs are more in touch with reality and time. While much of the territories they occupy have been declared part of their ancestral domain, they also

it should serve the people even for free. Its decision to charge higher fees can only mean its patients will be the ones who are going to provide the funds for the upgrade of PGH facilities. But whose responsibility is it to provide the funds—the patients' or the government's?

—IVY ROSE D. DE LEON,
1658 R Florentino St.,
Sampaloc, Manila

respect the prior rights of land owners who gained titles to the property they occupy prior to the passage of the IPRA law. No problem there ever since. Which means that those who are inside the ancestral territories of the IPs are secure in the thought that they are protected by the law. In turn, the IPs are confident that the State recognizes their territories as their domain. Stable peace and security have therefore reigned in the IPs' territories.

The MILF, on the other hand, wants a separate law to suit their demands. This is what makes those who are not members of the MILF restive. If the MILF can make a unilateral declaration that it shall respect the prior rights of those who are within the territories they want to claim as their ancestral domain, then the issue of domain will not be as contentious as to cause restiveness. In fact, it will settle doubts and promote inter-faith cohesiveness in the end.

In sum, we believe that the issue of ancestral domain would not be a deterrent to the truce if only the MILF were to state that it would respect prior rights the way the IPs do. With such declaration, the negotiating panels can move on to the last and final stage of peace talks: disarmament.

—MIRIAM DAHUNOG,
miriamdahunog70@yahoo.com



Psychological penalty instead of physical

THIS HAS REFERENCE TO TINA Arceo-Dumlao's news feature titled "Spare the rod; spoil your kids with love." (PDI, 1/3/07) According to her, children have rights and that physical and verbal abuse violates those inherent rights. Most of us Filipinos have grown in a world where parents punish or abuse their children physically whenever the latter do something wrong. The punishments are sometimes brutal, to the extent of adversely affecting a child's personality and entire life. Thus, a child may grow with a feeling of inferiority, isolation and loneliness.

Parents should understand that children don't have a full grasp of things around them. So, instead of hurting a child by physically punishing him or her for misbehavior, parents should just punish the child psychologically—for instance, by not letting him or her watch his or her favorite cartoon show.

A friendly conversation, which creates an emotional bonding between parent and child, also can also make the child realize his or her mistakes. After all, it would be nicer knowing that the arms that swings at the child when he or she misbehaves are the same arms that enfold him or her in a big, tight and loving hug.

Parents should allow their children to express themselves as they grow up and to exercise their imagination and creativity. In the process, the children will surely commit mistakes, but what is important is that they learn and they feel the love of their parents.

—JOHN PATRICK P. AVERILLA,
4-M J. Ruiz St.,
San Juan, Metro Manila

Throw BAP out of the game

THE MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE board of the Basketball Association of the Philippines (BAP) should be called not just for flagrant foul. They should be thrown out of the game! They didn't just "hit and tried to cripple" their president, Sen. Jinggoy Estrada. (PDI, 1/8/07) They tackled and pinned him down to prevent him from scoring the winning basket for RP basketball. They acted like immature people. They should be ashamed of what they did.

They ousted their president because he acted on his own. A stupid argument, if I may say so. I suggest that BAP's executive board members take the Basic Leadership Training. They obviously don't know what a good leader is.

In agreeing to business tycoon Manny V. Pangilinan of the Samahang Basketball ng Pilipinas (SBP), Sen. Jinggoy Estrada wasn't serving a certain group of people, or just the basketball community. He was doing something for the whole country.

As we all know, Filipinos have a great love for basketball, and we should be very proud that our national teams can compete well in international tournaments. They give us pride when they come home with trophies.

The BAP officials who proclaim their "undying love" for the sport, well, obviously

it's selfish love they have. They can keep it to themselves. Because of their selfishness, Philippine basketball has been pushed a step back. The agreement between business tycoon Manny V. Pangilinan of the Samahang Basketball ng Pilipinas (SBP) and Sen. Jinggoy Estrada would have paved the way for the lifting of the suspension of the Philippines from international basketball competitions. But BAP let that opportunity slip away from our own hands!

I just hope sanity would prevail in BAP soon—in time for us to participate in the qualifying rounds (to be held in July this year) for the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Another tournament coming is the Southeast Asian Basketball Association (SEA-BA). If the BAP problem cannot be solved soon enough, we can't play in these competitions.

That's why I call on all people concerned to unite and work together for the lifting of our suspension. In the first place, we have a common denominator here—our love for basketball. So, it should not be difficult for us to do the right thing. If we really love this sport, then, we'll do everything for it, wholeheartedly, no ifs, no buts. If we have to make personal sacrifices, then so be it.

—MELANIE P. ALDEON, 58 Lakeview Drive
St., Bagong Ilog, Pasig City

A government by crooks, drug lords, thieves

I WAS DRIVING AROUND ORTIGAS Center when I saw five people sniffing rugby under a flyover. They were visible to every passerby, whether he or she was inside a car or on the sidewalk. And across from the rugby-users, I saw police officers, and they were not doing anything.

This brought to mind the news reports last year about the "shabu tiange" in a city in Metro Manila. According to some

reports the mayor of that city had a hand in the operation of that "tiange."

With that news story in mind, I can't help thinking about the quality of the people running our government right now. It is really sad to see the government being dominated by crooks, drug lords and thieves.

—LORENZO MIGUEL FRESNOZA,
115 Edinburgh St.,
Pasig Green Park Village, Pasig City

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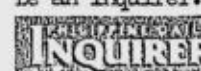
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Why not the world?

— Lea Salonga

Dare to ask.
Be an Inquirer.



The Burmese people's 'Open Heart'

COMMENTARY

Debbie Stothard

AS THE LEADERS OF THE ASSOCIATION of Southeast Asian Nations posed for the traditional group photo at the 12th Asean Summit in Cebu, many must have been secretly grimacing behind their smiles at the thought of the troublesome regime in Burma (Myanmar).

While Burma's ruling military junta dusts off its 10-year-old excuse—it is democratizing "step-by-step"—the Burmese people have courageously embarked on a simple quest to communicate with their dictatorship. The "Open Heart" campaign has ordinary people writing directly to Senior General Than Shwe to communicate their grievances. For most of us in the Asean, writing a letter may be routine, but for these people, it is a peaceful assertion of their freedom of expression. By including their identity details, it is also an act of defiance—because hundreds of people have been jailed in Myanmar for much lesser acts.

While cynics may claim that people cannot "eat" democracy, the people of Burma realize that they are literally being starved by a dictatorship. In 2006, the price of rice rose by 30 percent, even as the military diverted national funds to acquire new military hardware and to complete a new state-of-the-art capital. While child malnutrition reached 70 percent in many regions of the country and 25,000 people were displaced by military attacks in 2006, Than Shwe's daughter was bestowed with gifts worth \$50 million at her scandalously extravagant wedding last July.

The Asean must take responsibility for the deteriorating situation in Burma. By using "engagement" as a euphemism to shield the Burmese government from pressure, the Asean has emboldened it to misbehave further.

Burma joined the Asean in 1997. At the time, around 210,000 refugees had fled the country. Now the number is five times higher—more than a million asylum-seekers have left the country, and another million of its people are internally displaced. And since then, Burma has acquired the dubious distinction of being the world's No. 2 producer of heroin, opium and amphetamines. Burma now "exports" annually about 900 million amphetamine pills to Thailand alone. It is also a net exporter of HIV/AIDS to its neighbors, making border areas in India and China home to the highest rates of drug addiction and HIV infection.

Apparently unsatisfied with its notoriety, Burma has gone on to recruit the world's largest number of child soldiers (70,000) and is the only government in the world still using antipersonnel land mines on a regular basis, usually against civilians in rural areas. The traditional and non-traditional threats to regional security are indisputable.

The repression has not just impoverished

civilians and lower-ranking soldiers; it has caused such widespread human tragedy that ordinary people have been moved to risk detention and further persecution by writing letters to their dictator. They realize they must speak for themselves since over 1,000 of those who have done so—from charismatic democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi to ethnic, student and labor leaders and journalists—have been gagged and detained.

In the face of this courage, it is startling and disappointing that the Asean leaders seem to have chosen to disempower themselves of a peaceful, political solution to the Burmese problem. The Asean has expressed its desire to see reforms in Burma and has gone as far as openly expressing frustration and anger at its government. Unfortunately, Asean leaders seem to feel that this is all they can do.

Asean leaders know very well that the Burma's so-called roadmap to democracy hinges on the drafting of a new constitution to guarantee military dominance over the Parliament and the Cabinet. The drafting process has excluded 90 percent of the elected legislators and subjected participants to conditions described by a United Nations expert as "a mass house arrest." In November 2005, ethnic Shan leaders who attempted to discuss the constitution-drafting process independently were rounded up and sentenced to between 70 and 106 years in jail!

Asean leaders know that they cannot be jailed or tortured by the Burmese government for speaking up. They also realize that Burma has treated them with contempt by abusing their solidarity and severely undermining their credibility.

The Asean will not be able to earn the respect or get the cooperation of Burma's ruling generals unless it is willing to back rhetoric with leverage. The Asean is in a position, through Indonesia's seat on the United Nations Security Council, to compel the regime to deliver genuine reforms.

Burma is already on the official agenda of the Security Council. What is needed is a non-punitive resolution. The Asean has the opportunity to empower itself by engaging in this process. If not for the sake of the people of Burma, then for its self-respect.

Debbie Stothard is a coordinator of Alt-Asian-Burma (Alternative ASEAN Network on Burma), a broad regional network of groups and individuals supporting human rights and democracy in Burma. Stothard, a Malaysian, has been working on Burmese issues for more than 18 years.

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INQUIRER *Southern Luzon*

Editor Jun Bandayrel

Bureau Chief Floreño G. Solmirano

Pila townsfolk preserve heritage town

By Niña Catherine Calleja
Pila, Laguna

EVIDENCE OF HISPANIC INFLUENCE in the small Laguna town of Pila, 90 km south of Manila, have remained intact for centuries in spite of wars and recurrent typhoons.

Ask the residents how they have preserved the 35 ancestral houses and an old church in their town, they would answer: "Our town is blessed."

Stories passed on by the elderly say that a miracle happened during World War II when Japanese forces bombed towns and cities, including churches across the country.

"When the Japanese were about to hit the town and the church, what they saw was a vast body of water," 86-year-old Dr. Eden Relova said. "Why and how that happened has remained a mystery until now so the people have called the town Bayang Pinagpala (Blessed Town)."

Relova is a member of the Pila Historical Society Foundation and owns an ancestral house. The foundation consists of residents who have taken the task of preserving the town's cultural, historical and environmental heritage.

Established in 1993, the foundation organized the repair of the structures and led the research on Pila's history. Its efforts bore fruit when the National Historical Institute (NHI) on May 17, 2000 declared the town center a national historical landmark.

Since then, the town has attracted curious foreigners and scholars.

Oldest resident

Relova, whom the parish office secretary said is the oldest resident alive, maintains their family's 80-year-old house.

A 1958 graduate of Medicine from the Manila Central University, Relova can vividly recall the names of her ancestors and the memories behind their home.

She is the second to the youngest of 12 children of Arcadio Diaz Relova, the mayor (then Presidente de Municipales) of Pila who ordered the construction of the still existing municipal building in 1937, and Benita Dimaculangan, the first woman to wear a wedding gown in their town.

During her mother's time, brides commonly wore the "saya" (Filipina dress during the Spanish era), Relova said.

Their grandfather's surname used to be San Antonio, but the Spanish government issued an order prohibiting the use of the



THE STATUE of St. Anthony of Padua is as old as the church.

PHOTOS BY NIÑA CATHERINE CALLEJA



OLD FAMILY pictures of Dr. Relova

names of saints.

Thus, her grandparents changed it to Relova, from the word "relyebo," which means "change."

Hers is a family of politicians, Relova said. Her grandfather was a *cabeza de barangay* (barangay head) while several cousins became mayor and officials of the government.

A brother of her grandfather joined the Katipunan, a revolutionary organization during the Spanish regime.

Unlike her brothers and sisters who eventually moved to Manila, Relova chose to remain single and stay in Pila. Her adopted child and two caretakers accompany her now.

After graduating from the university, Relova worked as a doctor at the Laguna Provincial Hospital in Sta. Cruz town, a 30-minute travel from Pila. She also practiced in her hometown, she said.

"I was also known here as a midwife," she recounted. "All of the infants I helped to be born became my godchildren; my services for them were for free."

She could no longer remember the names of her godchildren, however.

Relova became active in politics, serving as councilor in 1956 and provincial board member in 1976.

Memoirs

Relova said she maintained the house as it was before.

"We cannot easily remodel and transform our house because there are so many things to recollect here. And besides, this is communal to family members and we only inherited the house from our parents," she said in Filipino.

Relova can still remember her elder sister, Luz, practice ballroom dancing in their house.

"She was one of the most beautiful women in town; I can no longer count the suitors who visited her," she said, pointing to a huge photo of her sister in a white gown.

But Luz died early of pneumonia, she said. During World War II, the Relova house was transformed into a hospital for wounded Filipino guerrillas.

Back then, Relova was only a college freshman. She said her family temporarily moved to Manila, except for her father who chose to help in the hospital.

Relova preserves family memories by collecting pictures and organizing them in albums with labels of date and occasion.

Even the photos of actor Dominic Ochoa, who, she said, is her first cousin's grandson, are displayed in the house.

Indeed, Pila's heritage never degenerated because its residents have been enthusiastic in preserving the old houses.

Lalaine Noceda, granddaughter of the owner of a century-old house, is among those who want to retain the old look.

"As much as possible, we (the family) will

maintain the house. This house is very important because our ancestors had lived here," Noceda said.

Old church

The town's pride, its church under its titular saint, Anthony de Padua, has existed for almost two centuries.

Parish records show that it took 18 years to finish the church which was established after the pastoral work of the Franciscan friars in 1578.

The church was then made of bamboo before it was rebuilt using stones.

In 1880, the people were forced to move from Sitio Pagalangan (now Victoria, Laguna) to its present site because of frequent flooding.

Parish office secretary Yolly Abello said the bricks and stones of the church from the previous site were also used to build the existing church. She said the foundation of the old church can still be seen in nearby Victoria town.

On July 9, 2002, the parish church was declared the Diocesan Shrine of St. Anthony of Padua.

Treasures

The NHI has also recognized the town as the most important archaeological site in the country. Apart from the historical structures, the town has a museum, the only one in Laguna that contains artifacts dating back to the 12th to 18th centuries.

An archaeological excavation in the 1960s led by architect Leandro Locsin in Pinagbayan, Pila's former site, yielded rare glass beads, gold jewelry and porcelain potteries with both Philippine designs and Chinese trademarks.

Pila Museum curator Eduardo Monteza said that during the excavation, tools used in calligraphy and Chinese ceramics dating back to the 11th century were found.

A paper written by researchers and historians led by Dr. Luciano Santiago, titled "Treasures of Pila," claimed that cremation was a burial practice based on the kinds of vessels found. These include small, brown, four-eared jars and large brown stoneware jars.

"Students from various schools and even foreigners visit this place just to have a glimpse of the artifacts," said Monteza.

Municipal tourism officer Lerma Torres said the officials had ensured that no establishment would be put up at the heritage site.

Although the site is under the NHI, her office keeps on monitoring its preservation and cleanliness, she said.



OLD HOUSES in Pila, Laguna



NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU
Room 201, Bonuan Apartelle
10 Happy Glen Loop, Baguio City
Tel. No. (074)443-9255
Fax No. (074)443-8971
E-mail: inq_baguio@inquirer.com.ph

SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU
2nd Floor, Los Baños Bldg.
Cor. Peñaranda and Aguinaldo Sts.
Legazpi City
Tel./Fax No. (052) 480-4182
E-mail: inq_bicol@inquirer.com.ph

E-mail: pr_provincial_news@inquirer.com.ph

VISAYAS BUREAU
c/o Cebu Daily News
18-15 Escario St., Cebu City
Tel. Nos. (032) 233-0346/233-0349
Fax No. (032) 232-9938
E-mail: inq_cebu@inquirer.com.ph

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Aerial spraying in plantations banned

DAVAO CITY—THE CITY COUNCIL ON TUESDAY approved an ordinance banning aerial spraying in banana plantations here.

Unlike in previous deliberations, Tuesday's closure of the question on whether or not the 30-year practice should be outlawed came without much debate.

For two years, the city council sat on the ordinance with various committees claiming they were conducting consultations.

This prompted Mayor Rodrigo Duterte to warn that unless the council ends the debate, he would be forced to take action on the issue of aerial spraying, which was being blamed for the prevalence of disease in areas near banana plantations.

Banana companies use aerial spraying in a bid to combat the spread of sigatoka disease or leaf streak. Sigatoka, which has two types—yellow and black—causes significant losses because it ripens bananas prematurely.

"We have fought against the giants but we made it. We are so happy that the city government has finally decided on a very important policy which will end our ordeal," Dagohoy Magaway, spokesperson of the coalition Mamamayan Ayaw sa Aerial Spraying (People Against Aerial Spraying), said.

Magaway's group was one of

AT LEAST A DOZEN COMPANIES operate banana plantations in Davao City. Among them are Dole-Stanfilco, Lapanday, AJMR and Tristar. These companies op-

erate in farms that have a combined total of 5,200 hectares but only 25 percent of these areas, or 1,300 hectares, are being sprayed from the air.

various organizations that pushed for the banning of aerial spraying in banana plantations here.

"The passage of the ordinance gives justice to the people. This is a triumph of people's right to health and healthy environment," he said.

Magaway said people living near banana plantations can now have "a life free of fear of getting

all sort of diseases which can only be attributed to their exposure to the chemicals being sprayed."

But the Pilipino Banana Growers and Exporters Associations (PBGEA) said it was hoping that the city council would approve their proposal for a 25-year phase-out period.

The PBGEA said the outright banning of aerial spraying would

entail more capital expenses to alter banana plantations' setup.

"We were hoping that the council will come up with something favorable to us. We wanted a 25-year phase period for us to reconfigure. We, however, welcome the decision and we intend to come up with a plan of action in the coming days with regards to the decision," Bruce Laguesma, a member of the PBGEA's environmental committee, said.

He said the PBGEA has foreseen that the city council's decision would have a "possible domino effect." He said this could be copied by other cities and provinces hosting banana plantations.

"As an effect, it might spill over other places in the region. It might also affect the quality of

the product. We also expect that it might create an impression in the international market that this city has banned one of the most important farming practices," Laguesma said.

Councilor Leo Avila, chair of the council's environment committee, said they have considered all positions before the ordinance was passed.

"We have heard both sides of the issue. Public health and environment versus local economy. The two are of great importance to any civilization. But when both factors collide, the policy of the State comes in to shed light and to remind us of the basic framework in which the government is created," Avila said. *Jeffrey Tupas, Inquirer Mindanao*

IN THE KNOW

ROUNDUP

Asean pacts to benefit Mindanao

DAVAO CITY—Many of the agreements signed by the Philippines with other countries during the 12th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) Summit and the 3rd East Asean Growth Area (Eaga) summit in Cebu will benefit Mindanao, according to Virgilio Leyretana, chair of the Mindanao Economic Development Council (Medco). Eaga is an economic grouping involving Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines. The availability of many resources needed to fulfill the agreements are found on the island, Leyretana told reporters here on Tuesday. Leyretana said Medco was holding meetings with local government officials to consolidate and integrate programs in support of the agreements.

Judy Quiros, Inquirer Mindanao

NPA rebels attack Globe tower

BUTUAN CITY—Suspected communist rebels attacked anew a tower of Globe Telecommunications in Barangay Misteryo, Claver, Surigao del Norte on Monday morning. Caraga police director Chief Supt. Antonio Nafias said about 20 rebels tied a security guard manning the tower and used land mines to bring the tower down. "There was no major damage, only the tower's generator was burned because one of the land mines failed to explode," Nafias told the INQUIRER. Late last month, a Globe Telecom tower was also bombed by NPA rebels in San Luis, Agusan del Sur, considered to be a communist hotbed.

Franklin A. Caliguid, Inquirer Mindanao

2 dead in Batangas shootout

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—An agent of the police Criminal Investigation and Detection Group was killed with a suspected member of a gun-for-hire syndicate, while another police official was wounded in a gunfight inside a girllie bar in Taal, Batangas at midnight on Thursday. CIDG-Calabarzon director Senior Supt. Mark Edison Belarmino said P01 Francisco Argente, assigned at the CIDG office in Batangas and Senior Insp. Raymond Perlado, deputy chief of CIDG-Batangas, went to the Lady Anne IV Disco Club in Barangay Cawit at midnight to verify a report that armed men were seen there. They were met by gunfire from an undetermined number of suspects. Perlado said he was able to shoot suspect Gregorio Ampunin, a former village chair of Barangay Caysasay in Taal, who died on the spot. Argente was declared dead on arrival at the hospital, while Perlado was in critical condition at a Batangas hospital.

Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon

Trader, 2 aides killed in Laguna

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—A businessman and his two aides were shot dead by unidentified men inside their store in San Pablo City just before dawn Monday. Calabarzon police director Chief Supt. Nicasio Radovan said storekeeper Sam had just opened the door of their store at about 2 a.m. when several armed men forcibly entered the store and shot him. The suspects went to the room where trader Josefino Resurreccion, 38, and his bodyguard Nognog Burgos were sleeping and shot them to death. Police found 11 shells from a .45 cal. pistol in the area.

Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon

New Capiz police chief

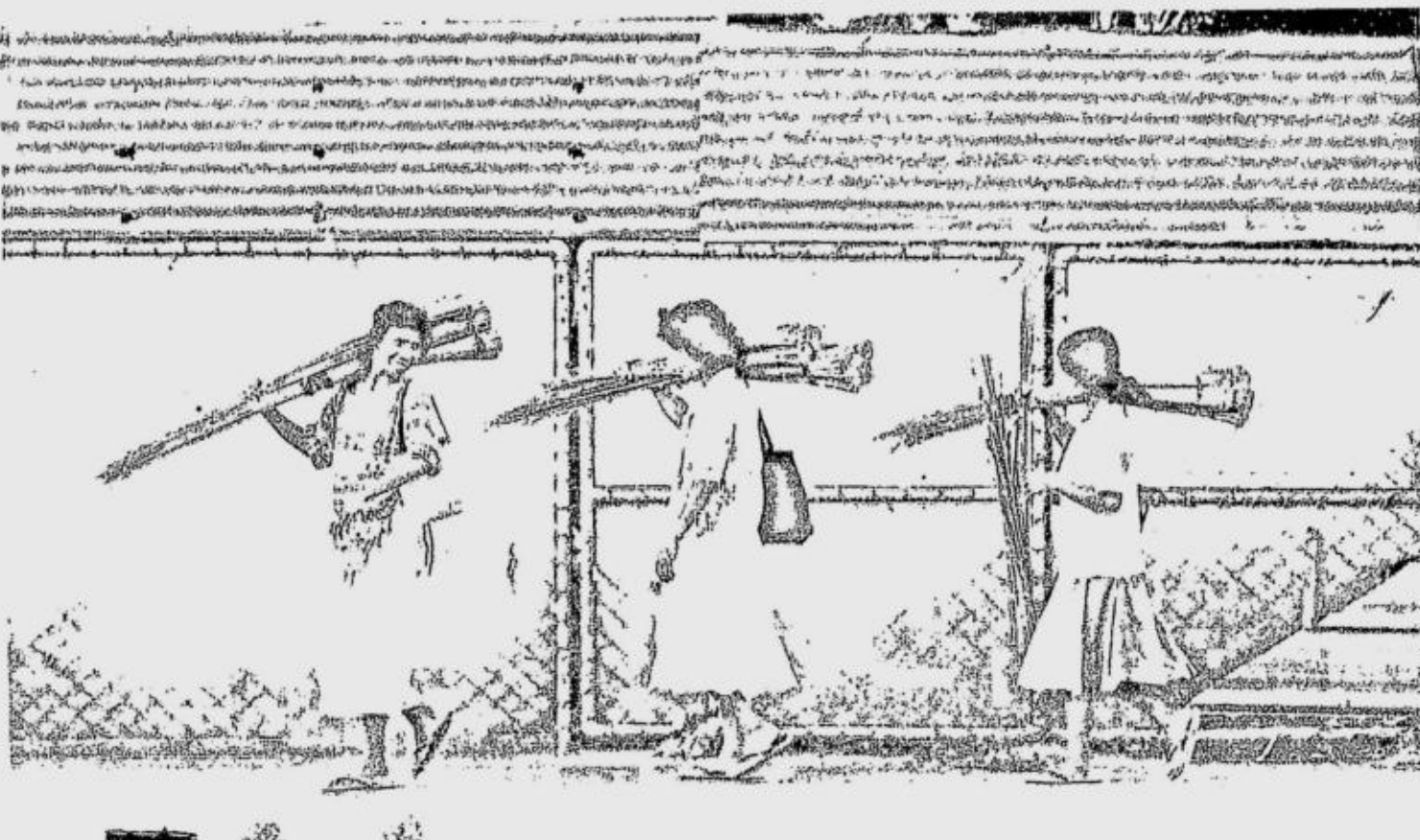
ROXAS CITY—Senior Supt. Coe Yee M. Co Jr. assumed Friday as the new provincial police director of Capiz following the relief last week of Senior Supt. Cipriano Querol. His two-year stint in the province ends this April. A turnover of command was held at the Capiz Police Provincial Office on Friday afternoon. Co was the former chief of the community relations office of the Western Visayas Regional Police Office based in Iloilo City.

Felipe V. Celino, Inquirer Visayas

64 houses for demolition

ROXAS CITY—Sixty-four squatter houses in Barangay I here are facing demolition as the government will use the area they are occupying to construct a bridge and start a circumferential road project. City Engineer Danilo Tumlos said notices have been sent to the families to remove their houses along the river on McKinley Street. Each of the family will receive P7,000 in financial assistance from the city, through its social welfare and development office, Tumlos added. The bridge project, that will connect Barangays Banica and Tiza, is being undertaken by the provincial government to decongest traffic at the San Roque Extension Street here.

Felipe Celino, Inquirer Visayas



FROM ALMS TO BROOMS

A group of Aetas from Iloilo province treks to Iloilo City as the city prepares for the celebration of the Dinagyang Festival. The Aetas, who used to simply beg for alms during the celebration, hope to cash in on the celebration, bringing with them brooms that they made and which they sell for P50 each.

ARNOLD ALMACEN/INQUIRER VISAYA

GMA son seeks mayors' backing for Lapid

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—PAMPANGA Rep. Juan Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo said he remained hopeful a compromise could be struck between 14 mayors and Sen. Manuel "Lito" Lapid and Gov. Mark Lapid.

Arroyo did not say, though, if his mother, President Macapagal-Arroyo, would intervene to settle the conflict of the mayors supporting Board Member Lilia Pineda for governor and the Lapids. The younger Lapid is seeking a

second term in the May elections.

"It is lamentable that allies and friends of the President would possibly come to blows in the political arena," Arroyo said a day after Gabriel Claudio, presidential adviser for political affairs, failed to reconcile the feuding camps in a meeting in Malacanan on Monday night.

That meeting was said to have been one of the backdoor channels that Senator Lapid worked out to win back the 14 mayors led by Lubao Mayor Dennis Pineda, president of the Pampanga May-

ors League and son of Board Member Pineda.

They broke alliance with the Lapids in November last year after the father and son, as Lakas-CMD provincial leaders, rejected the inclusion of last-term mayors in the slate for board members and refused to accept Mayor Pineda as the young Lapid's running mate.

After moving to Ms Arroyo's party, the Kabalik ng Mamamayang Pilipino (Kampi), the mayors pushed Board Member Pineda, wife of suspected jueteng lord Rodolfo "Bong" Pineda, for governor.

Even as Monday's meeting bogged down, Representative Arroyo said: "I pray that they come up with a compromise that would benefit our province."

He said he had distanced himself from the feud to avoid muddling it.

"They (Governor Lapid, Mayor Pineda and PML vice president Romeo Dunga) are friends. I think it is best that they settle whatever issues they have by themselves," he said.

He also hinted he would accept whatever results would come out of the reconciliation attempts.

Benguet bird flu ordinance declared illegal

BÚGUIAS, BENGUET—THE provincial legal office has declared as unlawful an ordinance passed by this town's council that sought to prevent the spread of the avian influenza or bird flu virus.

Lawyer Leticia Gutierrez-Duran, provincial legal officer, said Municipal Ordinance No. 13, enacted on Oct. 16, 2006, was not a legal and feasible regulation because it vio-

lated the freedom from restraint of trade and industry provided by the Local Government Code.

"The ordinance did not regulate but it aimed to prohibit the legitimate sale of poultry and livestock," Duran told the provincial board.

The board's committee on health and sanitation earlier sought the provincial legal office's opinion on the ordinance

when it was submitted before the board for review.

The town council here approved the ordinance proposed by Councilor Vicente Kitongan at the height of the avian flu scare last year.

To prevent the outbreak of avian flu in the town, the council passed the ordinance that disallowed the following:

- Sale or possession of any ex-

otic species of poultry or wildlife.

- Keeping in custody unregistered exotic birds for whatever purpose.

- Sale of live chicken in the market while there is a threat of bird flu.

- Placing together in one area chicken, ducks and pigs.
- Bird catching. *Delmar Cariño, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

Frost in veggie farms worries farmers

ATOK, BENGUET—THE BREEZE still blows cold here and farmers and local officials are worried that frost will hit their vegetable farms before the cold front tapers off by February.

But the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) in Baguio City said the farmers could relax.

Joseph Rios, Pagasa chief meteorological officer and senior weather specialist, said the 12.8 degrees Celsius recorded on Dec. 17, 2006, and on Jan. 10 this year was so far the coldest temperature in the province.

Rios said frost happens when the temperature dips to 10 degrees Celsius and below.

He said it was possible to predict the occurrence of frost and hailstorms to prepare the farmers.

The farmers often worry about frost from December to January and hailstorms during summer.

Frost and hailstorms had damaged vegetable farms here and in Kibungan town in the past and farmers accepted them as natural weather disturbances.

Joseph Domingo, president of the Ornos Di Man Ilid Atok, (Order of Atok Natives), a non-government organization for the elderly, said a study must be done to determine if it is possible to predict frost and hailstorms.

"It's possible. But the effort to study frost and hailstorms must

be done scientifically based on a multitude of relevant data," said Rios.

But all local offices on agriculture, including the Department of Agriculture, must coordinate and provide the needed data, such as rain and typhoon events and affected areas, he said.

The data, when compared and validated with Pagasa's records, could show a weather pattern that could be used as basis to predict if a frost or hailstorm would happen, he said.

Rios, however, said Pagasa still relies on satellite data when predicting rains and typhoons that would hit a wide area but not a specific province or town.

He said the establishment of an

agro-meteorological station in Benguet would increase the accuracy of frost and hailstorm prediction.

Hailstorms hit this town and Kibungan on April 13, May 7 and May 9 last year and damaged crops worth P50 million.

In early 2004, frost also damaged vegetable farms in the two towns.

Hailstorms, locally called "dalalo," are aggregates of water particles formed in clouds due to intense surface heat and fall as pebbles or marbles.

Frost, or "andap," is ice that gathers on vegetable farms, which could freeze and destroy plants in a prolonged period. *Delmar Cariño, Inquirer Northern Luzon*



HIGHLAND Benguet fresh vegetables sell cheaper in the Trinidad Trading Post in La Trinidad, Benguet. *FV ESPRITO/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON*

**GUARDIANS**

Policemen assigned to the Iloilo Rehabilitation Center spend idle time seated at the lobby of the Iloilo provincial capitol with an unenviable mission—prevent the entry of acting Gov. Roberto Armada and acting Vice Gov. Manny Gallar, who were named replacements of suspended Iloilo Gov. Niel Tupas.

Mudslides bury 3 houses in Agusan town as rains pour

SAN FRANCISCO, AGUSAN DEL SUR—A 50-year-old man is believed trapped in one of three houses that have been buried in mudslides in the remote village of Maasin in Esperanza town on Monday afternoon.

Pauline Jaramillo, Esperanza municipal information officer, identified the man believed buried in mud as Faustino Pungkol. Five others were able to escape from the rampaging mud that came crashing down from the mountain.

Jaramillo said she received radio reports from rescue teams sent to the area that several days of heavy rains in the village may have caused the mudslide.

At least two people, including Pungkol, were missing and six had been killed in the weeks of flooding that wrought devastation to 11 towns of the province.

The body of 72-year-old Igmeda Puna was found under oil palm trees of Filipinas Palm Oil Plantation Inc. in Purok 8, Sitio Apugan in Barangay Lapinigan

here Tuesday afternoon after she was reported missing Monday.

Rene Navarro, municipal disaster coordinator, said Puna tried to cross a flooded road on her way home when she was swept by strong currents.

On Sunday, 60-year-old Nicolas Malagapo was found dead near a small river in Sta. Maria, Prosperidad town. Relatives said the victim, a resident of neighboring St. Irene village, was last seen on Jan. 10 tending his carabao in his farm.

A 28-year-old man drowned last week after he tried to salvage floating logs along a swollen river in Barangay Piglawigan in Esperanza town. He hasn't been identified.

The body of 15-year-old Jemuel Serrano, of Barangay Sampaguita in Veruela, who was declared missing Jan. 9 after he was swept by strong currents, was recovered by residents on Monday.

Two other boys from Esperanza and Sta. Josefa towns drowned separately. Chris V. Panigaban, *Inquirer Mindanao*

Pinatubo settlers start getting land titles

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—THE government has settled the land dispute at the O'Donnell Resettlement Site in Capas, Tarlac, giving titles to 450 families displaced by Mt. Pinatubo's 1991 eruptions there.

Environment Undersecretary Manuel Gerochi distributed 200 titles on Tuesday, raising the number of recipients of patents to 450.

President Macapagal-Arroyo started giving the certificates of housing allocation in December last year.

Capas Mayor Reynaldo Catacutan has endorsed 900 more fami-

lies for the awarding of the lots.

The local inter-agency committee formed by former Environment Secretary Michael Defensor brought the 15-year-old dispute to a close in December.

The Department of National Defense had asserted claim over the 342-hectare resettlement because it was within Zone B of the Clark Air Base military reservation, a summary of the case showed. Zone B covers 7,000 hectares.

At the height of the eruptions and lahar onslaught, some 30,000 people sought refuge at

the resettlement site, which was considered to be safe because it was located on high grounds.

Former Tarlac Rep. Jesli Lapus, now education secretary, began the campaign to have the area titled to Mt. Pinatubo settlers, mostly from Capas and Concepcion towns.

Lapus invoked Presidential Proclamation No. 813 signed by former President Corazon Aquino on Oct. 11, 1991 or four months after the June 15 major eruptions. Aquino's PP 183 set aside the 342 hectares for resettlement, making these alienable and disposable.

Legal opinions further showed that the site was excluded from the coverage of the Clark Special Economic Zone, which the government developed from the 38,000-hectare Clark Air Base.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez upheld the opinion of Defensor that the site could be subject to titling in favor of Mt. Pinatubo victims.

Regidor de Leon, executive director of the DENR in Central Luzon, said the committee, composed of the DENR, Registry of Deeds, Capas government, National Housing Authority and

O'Donnell Pinatubo Homeowners Association, facilitated the issuance of patents and certificates of housing allocation.

"We're working fast to serve the remaining families and secure their tenure at O'Donnell," De Leon said.

O'Donnell was one of 23 resettlement sites that the government had built for 46,485 families in Pampanga, Tarlac and Zambales, reports from the defunct Mount Pinatubo Commission showed.

The eruption of Mt. Pinatubo covered a large part of the three Central Luzon

provinces in ash and lahar.

One town, Bacolor, was virtually wiped off from the map but its residents refused to surrender their town, reclaiming their communities from tons of ash and lahar that had buried homes, schools and churches.

Families that survived the lahar onslaught are now becoming sources of inspiration for thousands who lost homes and livelihood in the mudflow from Mayon volcano that followed Super typhoon "Reming" in Albay. *Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon*

Abra pols shy away from 1st list-up day

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—ABRA GOV. Vicente Valera is perhaps the most anticipated candidate in his province, but he and many Abra politicians have shied away from the first day of enlistment set by the Commission on Elections for aspiring candidates.

Like most veteran politicians, Abra officials are expected to file their candidacies only in the last few weeks before the March 29 deadline, said lawyer Jose Bagwan, Abra election supervisor.

"[Valera] went on leave [after being implicated in the murder of Abra Rep. Luis Bersamin Jr.]. We don't know where he is," Senior Supt. Alexander Pumecha, Abra police director, said.

Valera will not be arrested if he shows up to file his candidacy, Pumecha said, because no warrant of arrest has been issued for the governor.

Rufino Panday, a former soldier who was detained for Bersamin's murder outside the Mt. Carmel Church in Quezon City on Dec. 16 last year, accused Valera of masterminding the assassination.

But he recanted his statement on Monday, saying he was only forced to name Valera.

Relatives of Bersamin said they were not surprised by Panday's retraction. "We somewhat expected it to happen but we are very confident that the case will not be affected [by his retraction]," said Charrie Bersamin, the eldest daughter of the slain lawmaker.

She said they had been alerted to the possibility of a retraction when Panday's son, Benjie, claimed that his father was tortured.

She said the family received other pieces of information on the possible reasons behind Panday's retraction, but she declined to disclose these.

She said the case remained strong because of the physical evidence recovered by the po-



NO ORDINARY assassins, many of the members of Abra's private armies are youths who are enticed to join in exchange for college scholarship programs. When politics in Abra is in hiatus, many of the assassins are schooled in Baguio or Manila. *By ESPRITO INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON*

lice from Panday.

Valera is out on bail after he was charged by the police's Traffic Management Group with possession of unlicensed firearms while motoring around Quezon City in a vehicle that had no license plates.

The governor, however, is also facing a similar charge in Bangued, Abra, after the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group confiscated an unlicensed automatic rifle from his house there last month.

Abra prosecutors have not yet subpoenaed Valera, said Senior Supt. Eduardo Bayangos, CIDG Cordillera director.

Bagwan said a few aspiring politicians from the towns of Tingne and Licuan-Baay in Abra showed up to consult Comelec about the procedures for filing their candidacies, "but generally it has been peaceful in our office."

The Department of the Interior and Local Government has not been able to establish Valera's working status since he left the province and was arrested in Quezon City last month, although his wife, Bangued Mayor Maria Zita Valera, has filed a leave of absence, said Eleanor Madariaga, DILG Abra director.

Now that election season has started, Abra has been unusually peaceful because of the presence of police checkpoints, Madariaga said.

Comelec is still studying Valera's petition to place the province under its control, but Abra has been under special police protection since 2005, Pumecha said.

A government fact-finding team said most violent incidents there have been tied to local politics. *With a report from Leoncio Balbin Jr., Inquirer Northern Luzon*

Workers at multinational food firm barricade factory

CABUYAO, LAGUNA—WORKERS at a multinational food company here barricaded the firm's factory demanding compliance with a court ruling asking labor and management to proceed with negotiations over retirement benefits.

The Union of Filipino Employees-Drug, Food and Allied Industries Unions-Kilusang Mayo Uno (UFE-DFA-KMU) decided to barricade the company's factory after five years of a dispute with management over retirement benefits.

For three days now since Monday, about 300 to 500 workers have been staging a picket and blocking two gates of the factory.

"The workers' union is pressuring the Nestle management to abide by the ruling of the Supreme Court," Noel Alemania, acting union president, told the INQUIRER.

According to a high court decision dated Aug. 22, 2006, the retirement plan for the Nestle workers is a valid issue in the collective bargaining agreement between UFE-DFA-KMU and Nestle management.

In its decision, the high court directed the two parties to resume their negotiations.

But management, according to the workers, refused to negotiate.

"It has been almost five months but the management has yet to comply with the decision," Alemania said.

No strike

The protesters started to block the gates and put up makeshift tents at around 4:30 a.m. on Monday.

Alemania said they were able to paralyze the company's operations for two days now.

From the time they started the barricade, the workers were able to prevent the entry of people and vehicles, he added.

In an e-mail statement to the INQUIRER, the Nestle management, however, said there was no strike at the Cabuyao factory.

"There was a strike in 2002 but since then, there has been a sustained period of industrial peace in our premises in Cabuyao," said Pedro Dy-Liaco, director of Nestle's communications department.

"Those who are staging some form of mass action outside the Cabuyao factory are actually employees who were dismissed when they defied the return-to-work order by then Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas in connection with their illegal strike in 2002," he said.

He said that all operations are normal since Monday. "What is abnormal—and sad—is that legitimate employees are unable to enter or leave the factory to go home to their families and loved ones due to the illegal act of some ex-employees," he added.

Retirement plan

On Feb. 27, 2003, the Court of Appeals issued a decision saying the issue of retirement benefits

should be included in the CBA between the two parties.

The Office of the Solicitor General (OSG) said "the retirement benefit due the company's laborers upon retirement is considered a subject matter for negotiation."

The OSG also noted that the company committed unfair labor practice because of its failure to negotiate with the union on a substantial CBA issue.

Rey Batitis, board member of the union, said that the item on retirement benefits was one of the five important union demands.

He said the demands were based on a survey among the workers that was conducted before the CBA proposal was drafted. *Niña Catherine Calleja, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

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JAY Washington (left) of the Phone Pals finally asserts himself against Marc Pingris and the Giants.

RYAN LIM



Phone Pals knot series with Giants

Games Tomorrow (Ynares Center)
 4:35 p.m. — Sta. Lucia vs. Red Bull
 7:20 p.m. — Talk 'N Text vs. Purefoods

By Musong R. Castillo

DERRICK PUMAREN CAME DOWN HARD on Anthony Washington and Yancy de Ocampo the last time out.

And the Talk 'N Text coach may have just discovered what it would take for his Phone Pals to win their Philippine Cup quarterfinal series against defending champion Purefoods.

Washington and De Ocampo, virtual non-factors in the series-opener on Sunday, tossed in 26 points each to power the Phone Pals in two separate stages of a runaway 110-92 decision of the Chunkee Giants last night at the Cuneta Astrodome.

A big man also woke up from slumber and keyed a 100-98 overtime victory by Red Bull over Sta. Lucia that also knotted their series at 1-1 in the nightcap.

Enrico Villanueva, scoreless in the first three periods, scored six of his eight points in overtime as the Barako rallied from a 13-point first half deficit to pull even despite what coach Yeng Guiao said was an unimpressive game.

"We're still struggling," Guiao said. "Wala pa rin yung dati naming laro (we still have to come up with our old game)."

"There is a strong possibility that this series will go five games," he added. "We're preparing ourselves for the long haul, and I think, us being a better rested team, we have the advantage if this (series) goes the full route."

The 6-foot-9 De Ocampo's point total was also his career-high, proving his worth in only his second game since a celebrated, one-sided trade before the holidays. He tossed in 16 points in the fourth period to finish what Washington had started as the Phone Pals drew level at 1-1 with the crucial third game scheduled tomorrow at the Ynares Center.

Washington, the 6-foot-7 sophomore who scored just seven points in an 89-96 Game 1 loss, scored 10 in the first period and 12 in the next two when the Phone Pals, who have never won a best-of-five series after losing Game 1, established firm control.

"I came down hard on them the last game, told them that they cannot play soft here," Pumaren said. "This is the playoffs and tonight, we played to our true potential, unlike (in Game 1) when we really came out flat."

But Pumaren could lose Jimmy Alapag for the next game after his starting point guard was tossed out of the court with just 49 seconds left for throwing what looked like a left jab to the face of Paul Artadi.

"I hope that we can still have momentum on our side, though I think we will lose Jimmy (Alapag for the next game)," Pumaren said. "We should not be happy with this win because we only equalized."

So great was De Ocampo, who hit eight points Sunday, that he kept Asi Taulava on the bench for all but 18 minutes, with the Fil-Tongan center finishing with just two points.

The Scores:

First Game

Talk 'N Text 110 — Washington 26, De Ocampo 26, Ritualo 18, Cardona 11, Belano 11, Carey 9, Alapag 7, Taulava 2, Fran 0, Noble 0, Pablo 0.

Purefoods 92 — J. Yap 25, Raymundo 15, Simon 12, Limpot 8, Salvador 7, R. Yap 7, Artadi 5, Evangelista 4, Castillo 3, Pingris 2, Yee 2, Camaso 2.

Quarters: 21-19, 53-41, 73-61, 110-92.

Second Game

Red Bull 100 — Valenzuela 18, Pennisi 16, Cruz 14, Bagulo 14, Sharma 10, Villanueva 8, Fonacier 6, Bugla 6, Alvarez 4, Robinson 4, Najorda 0.

Sta. Lucia 98 — Williams 22, Aquino 22, Omolon 19, Mendoza 14, Cabagnot 8, Gonzales 6, Espino 5, Isip 2, Bughao 0, Catli 0, Callimag 0.

Quarters: 23-24, 37-44, 62-68, 89-all, 100-98.



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POC forms Task Force

THE PHILIPPINE OLYMPIC COMMITTEE yesterday formed a task force in charge of monitoring the country's preparation for the 2007 Southeast Asian Games in Thailand.

POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco Jr. appointed Julian Camacho of wushu as task force head and named Romeo Ribano of squash and swimming's Mark Joseph as Camacho's deputies.

June Navarro

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Editor Ester G. Dipasupil

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Gov't keen on takeover of MRT 3

'Move could mean savings in fare subsidy, interest payments'

By Riza T. Olchondra

THE GOVERNMENT WANTS TO take over the management and operations of the Metro Rail Transit (MRT 3) from the So-brepeña-led owner Metro Rail Transit Corp. (MRTC), according to a high-ranking official of the Department of Transportation and Communication.

"The Office of the President has decided to implement the buyout as recommended by the Department of Finance," Transport Undersecretary for Railways Gulling Mamondiong said in an interview yesterday. "The target is anytime this year."

Strategy

It may be recalled that the government issued Memorandum Order 181 in August 2005 to create an inter-agency committee headed by the finance department to draft a takeover strategy.

Mamondiong said the government sees the takeover or the so-called "reverse privatization" of the MRT 3 as a way to save on fare subsidies and interest pay-

ments it was making to MRTC, which built the railway system under a build-lease-transfer scheme.

MRT 3 general manager Roberto Lastimoso had said in an earlier interview that they should be charging P60 instead of the current minimum fare of P12. The difference is being shouldered by the government.

Revenues

According to Lastimoso, the MRT 3, which runs daily from North Avenue in Quezon City to Taft in Pasay City, earns P135 million in monthly revenues and another P20 million from development rights fees.

However, the revenues are not enough to cover the monthly maintenance expenses of P250 million.

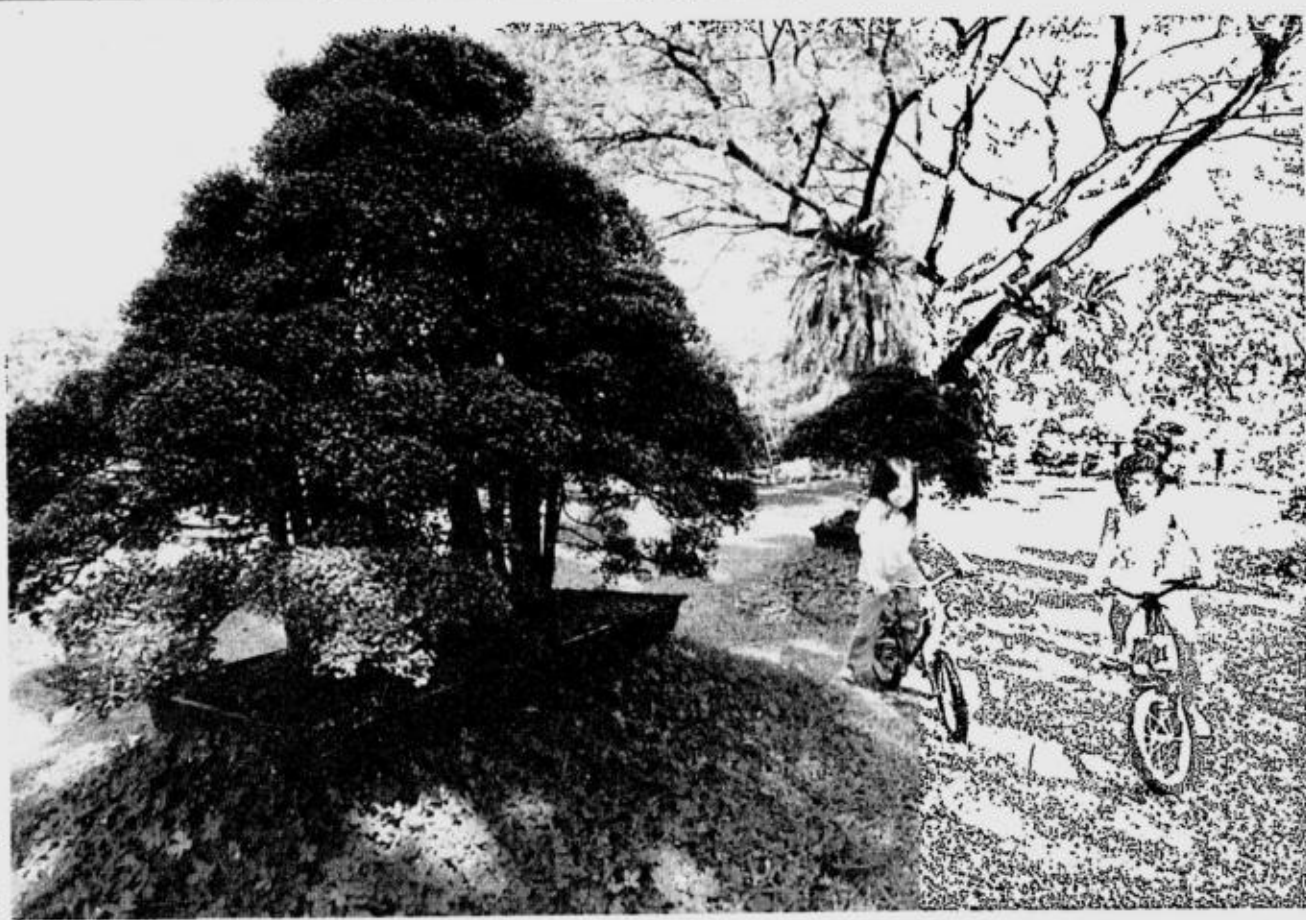
Subsidy

While the takeover is pending, the transportation department will continue to subsidize the expenses of MRT 3 and pay part of its obligations to MRTC, which government officials placed at around P2.2 billion last year.

'BABY TREES'

Children enjoy a bicycle ride inside the bonsai garden of the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City. The garden features collections of large bonsai.

JOAN BONDOC



Quezon City gives up title as 'car theft capital;' fewer cases recorded

By DJ Yap

QUEZON CITY, DUBBED AS the country's "car theft capital" for having the most number of car theft cases nationwide, may soon have to give up the dubious title.

According to the police, the incidence of car theft cases in the city was nearly cut in half in 2006—from 176 cases—compared to 312 cases in 2005.

A report by Senior Supt. Magtanggol Gatdula, Quezon City Police District director showed that of the 2006 figure, 142 of the cases involved vehicles that had been stolen while parked. The rest were car hijackings, in which the perpetrators, usually heavily armed, took the vehicles by force, the report revealed.

Based on statistics compiled by the QCPD anticar theft unit, the most number of cases were concentrated in Police Station 10 which covers South Triangle, Kamuning, Pinyahan, Santol

and Laging Handa.

The second and third highest numbers were registered respectively by Station 9—which covers Sikatuna, Diliman, Teachers' Village and Loyola Heights—and Station 3 which covers Barangays Tandang Sora, Bahay Toro, Bagong Pagasa and Culiat.

But among the car hijacking cases, incidence was highest at Station 1 which covers Manresa, La Loma, Sto. Domingo and Sta. Teresita.

"However, the most alarming report may be derived from the report of Station 7 as it reported only six car theft incidents but four of these were forcibly taken by armed malefactors all within the Araneta Shopping Complex in Cubao..." the report said.

The numbers qualified the area as one of the most dangerous "hot spots" for car owners, along with Tomas Morato, Timog Avenue, and the Scout areas, all under Station 10, it added.

'Reinstated Pasay execs expelled from PMP'

By Jocelyn R. Uy

DISMISSED PASAY MAYOR Wenceslao "Peewee" Trinidad yesterday said his political party, the Partido ng Masang Pilipino (PMP), agreed to expel the two councilors who have turned state witness in the graft case filed against him and nine other officials.

The decision to kick out Councilors Generoso Cuneta and his wife, Ma. Antonia, was made by the party's local executive committee yesterday morning, Trinidad told the INQUIRER.

"We will expel them from the party because they are turncoats," said Trinidad who was served his dismissal order on Monday, the same day the Cunetas were reinstated to their old posts and acting Mayor Allan Panaligan was sworn in as the city's chief executive on a permanent basis.

The two councilors were granted immunity by the Office of the Ombudsman in exchange for turning state witness in the graft case filed against Trinidad, Vice Mayor Antonino Calixto and eight other city councilors.

Trinidad, Calixto and 10 city councilors, including the Cunetas, were charged last year for allegedly approving P232-million worth of garbage contracts without a public bidding. After being slapped a six-month suspension order in September by the Office by the Ombudsman, all, except the Cunetas, were ordered dismissed from government service last Monday.

According to Antonia, she and her husband decided to "come out with the truth" about the dubious garbage collection contracts as they "could not take it anymore."

In their affidavits which they filed two weeks after they were suspended last September, the Cunetas alleged that Trinidad had received bribes from private hauling companies in exchange for the extension of their contracts with the local government.

Trinidad, meanwhile, claimed that the couple were coerced into turning state witness by his political rivals.

He claimed that the Cunetas yielded to "undue influence" just to save their necks.



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Kin of suspected shabu mart owner charged for threat letter

By Margaux C. Ortiz

THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION (NBI) has filed charges against the half-brother of Amin Imam Boratong, the suspected operator of a shabu market in Pasig City which the police raided last February, and his relative.

Charges of light threat were filed on Tuesday by the NBI against Samer Palao after he allegedly sent a threatening letter to Boratong.

Also included in the complaint filed in the Manila Prosecutor's Office was Palao's relative, Glicerio Bahande, who delivered the letter to Boratong.

Palao is in the custody of the Pasig City police for allegedly kidnapping and killing the brother of Boratong's first wife, Mimi. After his arrest, he offered to testify on the operations of the shabu market in Pasig City allegedly maintained by Boratong.

According to NBI Reaction, Arrest and Interdiction Division (RAID) chief Roel Bolivar, Bahande visited Boratong at the NBI jail on Jan. 13. Boratong later complained to a security officer that Bahande had given him a letter from Palao which contained threats.

When Bahande came back two days later to get Boratong's reply, NBI security officers apprehended him.

In his letter to Boratong written in Maranao, Palao said he was willing to stop cooperating with the police on the drug case filed against the former. The NBI last year filed charges against Boratong for maintaining a drug den. "In exchange, he wanted Boratong to convince Mimi to drop the charges against him for allegedly kidnapping and murdering her brother," Bolivar said.

In the letter, Palao also warned Boratong that the latter could lose his wife and wealth "if he failed to think about his subsequent actions."

Pasig records highest number of illegal drugs cases in EPD

AFTER BREAKING UP A NOTORIOUS SHABU mart in the city last year, Pasig has the unenviable reputation of recording the highest number of illegal drugs-related cases in the Eastern Police District to date.

In a recent report released by the EPD Intelligence Division, Pasig City listed 540 persons involved in illegal drugs in 2006, the highest compared to the cities of Marikina (218), and Mandaluyong (151), and San Juan town (294).

"These people have been on the watch list for some time now," Pasig chief of police Francisco Uyami told the INQUIRER.

According to the report presented to the city and municipal antidrug councils, there are about 1,203 persons involved in drug-related activities in the district, 519 of whom were pushers of illegal drugs, 682 users and two financiers.

The District Anti-Illegal Drugs-Special Operations Task Force (DAID-SOTF) also released the names of its most wanted in the

area: Maira Disumangcop, Domingo Pangan alias Inggo, Francis Mendiola, Jojo Caneso, Rodel Legaspi, Rachel Cort, Joey Pirote alias Yoyong and Choy Millondaga. Amin and Sheryl Boratong were reported as arrested by the police.

Shabu, marijuana and inhalants are still the drugs of choice, with 62.5 percent, 27.3 percent and 10.2 percent of reported usage respectively, the report said.

Most of the drug users in the area belong to the 20-29 age group bracket, it added.

"We are hoping to neutralize at least 30 percent of the reported cases this year," DAID-SOTF PSupt. John Sosito said.

The Eastern police is working double time to intensify its campaign against the use and sale of illegal drugs.

In Marikina City, the arrest of Larry and Dyesebel de la Cruz—tagged as the No. 1 drug pushers—last year resulted in the substantial reduction of the drugs supply in the city, police said.

Emman M. Cena

'Saver of souls' laid to rest

By Miko L. Morelos

THE MOTHER OF ACTRESS AND environment advocate Chin Chin Gutierrez was buried yesterday beside her parents at the Loyola Memorial Park in Marikina City.

During the funeral, Cecilia Arnaldo's family, relatives and friends, who were on hand to bid her farewell, shared their fondest memories of the woman, a former nun who figured in a dramatic rescue last December when she was rescued by the actress from a fire that razed their home.

Sister Raquel de Leon of the Franciscan Missionaries disclosed that Arnaldo said goodbye to her two days before she left the convent. "She didn't tell me why she wanted to leave but I saw that she had her reasons," Sister Raquel said.

Arnaldo's white casket was lowered into the ground at noon, accompanied by a shower of flowers. Gutierrez kissed a white rose before placing it on top of the coffin.

Arnaldo died on Jan. 12 of complications due to diabetes. She was 64.

According to Anjie Ureta, Gutierrez's manager, Arnaldo entered the convent in the 1960s, only to leave 10 years later.

Sister Raquel recalled Arnaldo's love for the arts. "She would sketch and sometimes, we would even wake up in the middle of the night in the convent and have a cup of coffee as she drew," the nun said.

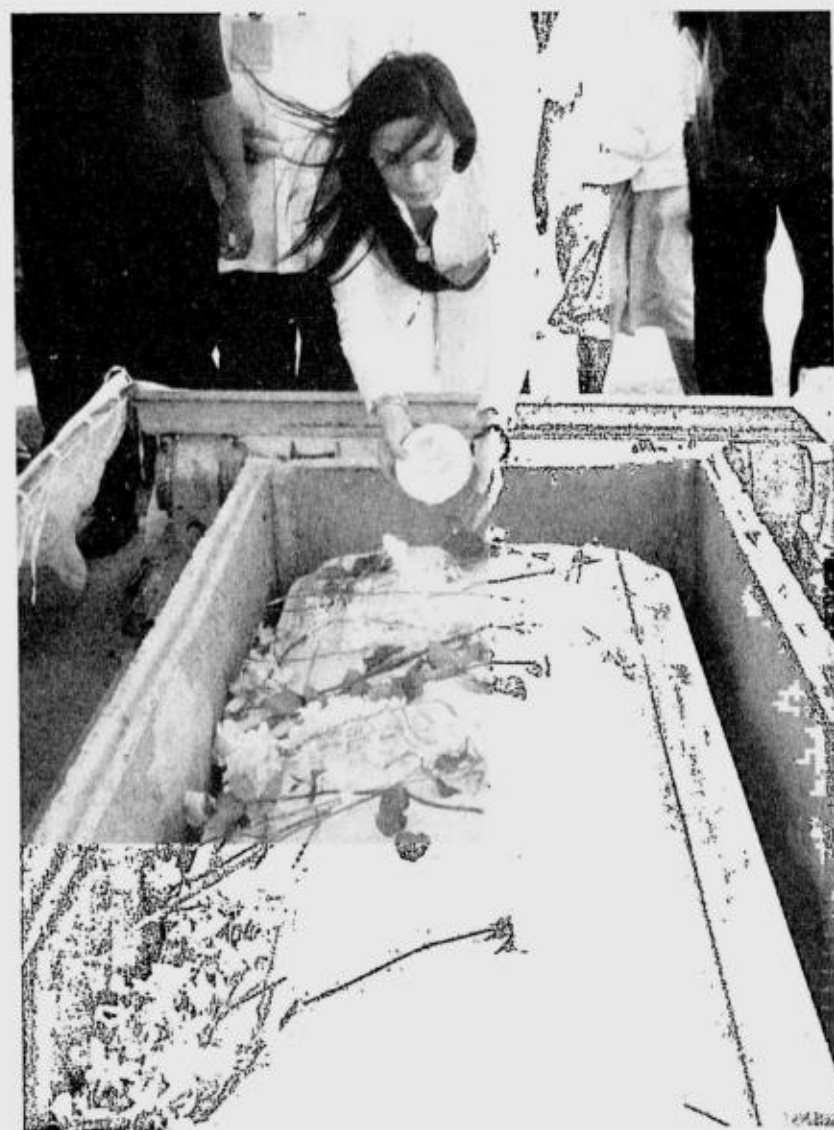
But leaving the convent did not stop Cecilia from doing missionary work.

Gutierrez said in her eulogy that her mother went to different places to conduct Bible studies and to continue her work of "saving souls."

This almost cost her mother her life at one time, the actress said.

"One time, she was in Mindoro. In the middle of the night, a man came to their mission house and tried to steal aluminum pots," she said. "Mama was hit in the arm with a sickle by the thief."

The thief eventually left and her mother was treated for her injuries, Gutierrez said.



ACTRESS Chin-Chin Gutierrez places a picture of a flower on her mother's coffin as it is lowered to the ground yesterday. Cecilia Arnaldo was buried at the Loyola Memorial Park in Marikina City.

RAFFY LERMA

She asked her mother to stop her work, but she remained steadfast in her mission, the actress added.

Last December, their house at Loyola Heights, Quezon City was gutted by fire.

Gutierrez suffered second degree burns and cuts when she jumped down from the second floor to get to her bedridden mother on the ground floor.

She was hospitalized for several days while Arnaldo was confined at the intensive care unit for weeks.

Arnaldo had been stricken with diabetes but in the last three years, her condition had worsened, her brother Choy said.

Gutierrez's friends in show business staged a concert on Monday night to raise funds for the actress who had lost most of her belongings in the fire.

Gutierrez, a mainstay in the ABS-CBN soap opera "Maging Sino Ka Man," is an active environmentalist.

She was named one of The Outstanding Women in the Nation's Service in 2004 and honored by Time magazine as a modern-day Asian hero in 2003. Gutierrez is also a supporter of the animal rights group, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, as well as the environmental group Greenpeace.

Grateful town rebuilds Muntinlupa homes

By Julie M. Aurelio

TWO HUNDRED FAMILIES IN Muntinlupa City who lost their homes in a fire late last year will now be able to rebuild their houses after their sister city, Sta. Cruz in Marinduque, donated coco lumber to the victims.

Sta. Cruz Vice Mayor Ruben Revilla recently delivered to Muntinlupa Mayor Jaime Fresnedi four truckloads of coco lumber.

Appreciation

Revilla said this was his town's way of showing its appreciation for the assistance given by Muntinlupa last year to Marinduque which was hit by Super typhoon "Reming" last year.

The Muntinlupa city government

donated P1 million last year to the province which suffered extensive damages because of "Reming."

Homeless

Two hundred families were left homeless when a fire broke out in Sitio Salvacion, Barangay Tunasan last Dec. 20.

The residents temporarily sought shelter in a multipurpose hall near the area after the fire.

The donation of coco lumber is expected to help them build temporary shelters for their families until the city government is able to build new houses for them.

Housing

Public information officer Tez Va-

lencia told the INQUIRER that the affected families are staying in temporary housing facilities provided by the city government.

DID YOU KNOW

OF THE 2.1 MILLION households in the National Capital Region, about 1.5 million (approximately 70 percent) use liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) for cooking. Around 18 percent (377,000) prefer kerosene while a little over five percent (116,000) use electricity.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

A matter of survival

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo



THURSDAY LAST WEEK WAS ONE OF the lowest points of my life. I came face to face with a longtime friend, Col. Joey Yuchongco, who charged me with extortion in the Pasig City prosecutor's office.

Why Yuchongco, chief of the police division of the Bureau of Customs, filed the case is a big mystery to me. My friendship with Joey Yuchongco dates back to the time when he was still an ordinary customs policeman in the 1980s.

Joey was one of my sources on the goings-on at the customs bureau. In fact, I learned about the alleged smuggling activities of a brother-sister tandem through Joey.

Yuchongco now accuses me of extorting P300,000 from him two years ago. Why did it take him that long to complain? Where did he get the money?

But granting I did, I would be worse than the worst criminal. Even an unconscionable extortionist would not fleece a friend.

Joey must have filed the case against his friend as an act of survival. He was driven to it. He has a pending case with the Office of the Ombudsman for unexplained wealth.

In this life, there are no permanent friends, only permanent interests. Some people would abandon their friends in distress when their survival is also at stake.

Until now, the issue of President

Macapagal-Arroyo's legitimacy in office still haunts her despite going through two impeachment proceedings unscathed.

A text message purportedly coming from former Ambassador Roy Señeres that was sent to friends and strangers says it all.

The text message: "I am not running for senator or congressman. Shd i run and win, any bill that i wud sponsor wil have to be submittid to president (arroyo) for approval to become law. I wud nt want any bill dat I wud sponsor to be touched by a fake president. (pls pass)."

I received the same text message from four sources. In short, the message was so popular it was passed on from one phone holder to another.

I would not venture an estimate of the number of people who received the text message, but I'd say they ran into millions throughout the country.

Smart way to beat the election campaign ban and at the same time take a potshot at GMA whose people are running in this year's polls.

The dismissal from office of Pasay

City Mayor Wenceslao "Peewee" Trinidad and the suspension of Batangas Gov. Armand Sanchez smack of political harassment.

The moves were made to beat the ban on suspension and dismissal of officials during the election period that has now started.

Peewee Trinidad, a lawyer, has been in office—as vice mayor and mayor—too long to be lured by easy and dirty money.

He and many of his subordinates were dismissed for a supposed garbage collection scam.

Same with Sanchez. Everybody in Batangas knows he's not interested in making money from the government because he earned his billions from another source.

Sanchez has done for Batangas—building more schools and bridges and improving the collection of the provincial government—more than what his predecessors did.

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Will Ferrell
Stranger than Fiction

★★★★★

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THURSDAY, JANUARY 18, 2007

The WORLD

A19

42 killed as ice storms, floods hit US

CHICAGO—A MASSIVE WINTER storm has covered swaths of the United States in a mantle of snow, sleet and ice, killing 42 people, threatening millions of dollars in citrus crops and leaving hundreds of thousands without electricity, officials said Tuesday.

"This is a big one, affecting all the way from New Mexico to Maine," said Dennis Feltgen, a spokesperson for the National Weather Service.

The worst-hit areas were Oklahoma, where freezing rain left behind a sheet of ice, and Missouri, hard hit by sleet, he said.

"With the ice, the trees come down on the power lines, and in Oklahoma it's going to take the rest of the week to get all that restored," he said. "The lines are completely down. It's not like it's a transformer here and there—it's the whole grid." The storm, which struck Friday, was caused by an enormous cold front that forced temperatures down by as much as 17 degrees Celsius and brought wave after wave of freezing rain and sleet as it moved slowly eastward.

It weakened somewhat Tuesday, sparing major East Coast cities such

as New York, Boston and Philadelphia from the worst of the ice and sleet.

The National Weather Service issued flood warnings and advisories in several states, from Louisiana in the south to Ohio and Illinois in the Midwest, while an ice storm warning was posted for parts of the northeastern states of New Hampshire and Maine. The Weather Service also issued a warning early Tuesday for "frozen precipitation and ice accumulation" across Houston and other parts of southeastern Texas through Wednesday.

The storm has already caused ice storms in western parts of New York state, forecasters said.

In hard-hit Oklahoma, Federal Emergency Management Agency workers distributed electrical generators and bottled water to communities hammered by the ice storm, after President George W. Bush declared an emergency in Oklahoma on Sunday.

The Oklahoma Highway Patrol reported more than 300 road accidents in which 14 people were killed, including seven in a minivan crash Sunday.

Some 103,000 people were also without power, according to Oklahoma's Department of Emergency Management.

Bush also declared a state of emergency for Missouri—including the city of St. Louis—on Monday, freeing up federal funding for recovery efforts.

State officials said eight people had been killed in the Missouri storms, including seven who died in traffic accidents and one killed by carbon monoxide poisoning—common when people without electricity use fuel-burning stoves for heat. **AFP**

Bush: Iraq government fumbled on hanging

WASHINGTON—US PRESIDENT George W. Bush charged Tuesday that Saddam Hussein's execution resembled a sectarian "revenge killing" and has made it harder to end deadly violence in war-torn Iraq.

Bush told PBS television that the ousted dictator's hanging had "reinforced doubts" about Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki and made it clear that his fledgling government "has still got some maturation to do."

The US president said he had been "pleased" with the trials of Saddam and two top aides, who have also been executed, but that Iraq's government "fumbled" in carrying out the death sentence against the toppled strongman.

"When it came to execute him, it looked like it was kind of a revenge killing. And it sent a mixed signal to the American people and the people around the world," Bush told the network.

"And it just goes to show that this is a government that has still got some maturation to do," said the US president.

Widely disseminated footage of the hanging shows the ousted dictator's captors mocking him in his final moments and shouting the name of a radical Shiite Muslim cleric—angering Saddam's fellow minority Sunnis.

Bush said the execution "reinforced doubts" about al-Maliki's desires to quell the violence and about whether "the unity government of Iraq is a serious government."

Bush, who last week unveiled what may be a last-ditch effort to pacify Iraq, told PBS that this "makes it harder for me to make the case to the American people that this is a government that does want to unify the country." **AFP**

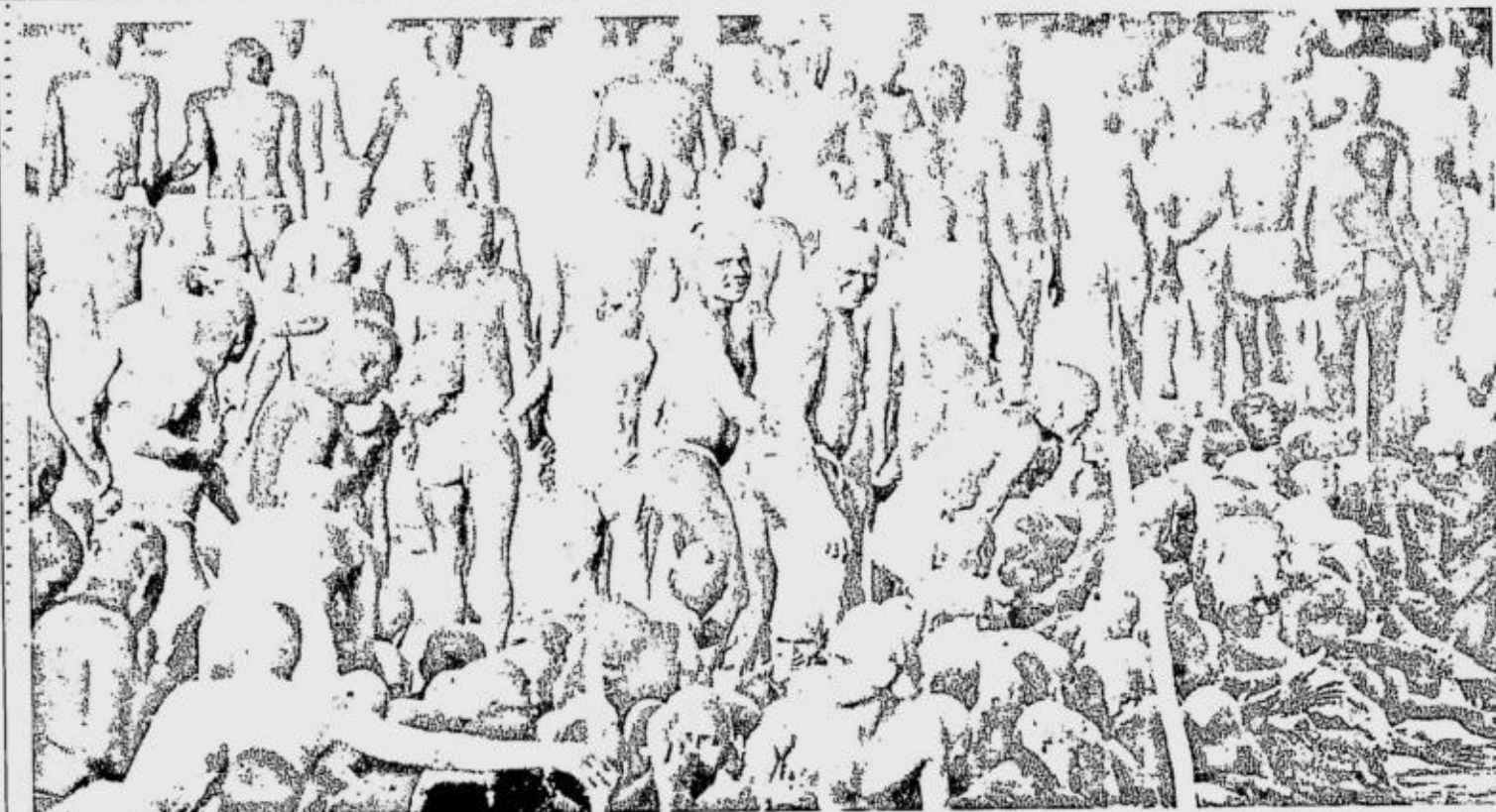
Hangings aggravate sectarianism

CAIRO—THE BOTCHED HANGING of Saddam Hussein and two lieutenants in Iraq by its Shiited government has helped to accelerate Sunni-Shiite sectarianism across an already fragile Middle East, according to experts across the region.

The chaotic executions and the calm with which Saddam confronted the gallows and mocking Shiite guards have bolstered his image among many of his fellow Sunni Muslims. But something else is happening too: A pan-Muslim unity that surged after the summer war between Israel and Hezbollah, the Lebanese Shiite militia, is waning.

And while political analysts and government officials in the region say the spreading Sunni disillusionment with Shiites and their backers in Iran will benefit Sunni-led governments and the United States, they and others worry that the tensions could start to balkanize the region as they have in Iraq itself.

"The reality of the current situation is that we are approaching an open Sunni-Shiite conflict in the region," said Emad Gad, a specialist in international relations at Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies in Cairo. **NYT**



HINDU RITUAL

Hindu holy men participate in rituals that will rid them of all ties in this life so that they can dedicate themselves to serving God as a 'Naga' or naked holy men, during the Ardh Kumbh festival in Allahabad, India Jan. 16. The significance of nakedness is that they will not have any worldly ties to material belongings, even clothes. This ritual can only be done at the Kumbh festival. **AP**

Obama bares bid for US president

WASHINGTON—CHARISMATIC Democratic Party star Barack Obama on Tuesday took his first official step in his bid to become the first black president of the United States.

In a video posted on his website, barackobama.com, Obama announced he was filing papers with federal election authorities ahead of the 2008 vote, in which he could seek to wrest the Democratic nomination from former first lady and New York Senator Hillary Clinton.

"I certainly didn't expect to find myself in this position a year ago," Obama said, announcing he would set up an exploratory committee allowing him to raise campaign funds and gauge support among the US public.

The 45-year-old senator, who is the son of a black Kenyan father and a white American mother from the US heartland state of Kansas, has exploded onto the US political scene just two years into his six-year Senate term.

Obama said that after talks around the country, he will make an announcement about running on Feb. 10 in Illinois, the state he represents as a senator.

The move potentially sets up one of the most watched primary battles in decades, should Clinton, wife of former president Bill Clinton, also decides to run, as expected.

Obama said he was joining the race to take over the White House from Republican President



OBAMA

George W. Bush, who is serving his second and last four-year term, at the urging of supporters across the United States.

"I've spoken to many of you in my travels across the states these past months—as I've read your emails and read your letters—I've been struck by how hungry we all are for a different kind of politics," he said.

Pundits—even those who have been dazzled by Obama's meteoric rise from political unknown to Democratic Party star—said they were caught off guard by his decision to vie so early in his career for the most coveted prize in US politics.

"I'm surprised, very surprised," said veteran politics watcher Larry Sabato, who runs the Center for Politics at the University of Virginia. **AFP**

WORLD BRIEFS

Ex-White House aide's trial starts

WASHINGTON—The trial of former top White House aide Lewis "Scooter" Libby on perjury charges opened Tuesday in a case that has all the elements of a political spy thriller and could see Vice President Dick Cheney called in to provide testimony. Some 100 prospective jurors filled out forms which will help determine which among them have not been prejudiced by the media furor around the three-and-a-half-year-old case involving a spy's blown cover, preparations by the administration of President George W. Bush for the war in Iraq, and intrigue among Washington's power brokers. Libby is charged with allegedly trying to cover the facts during a federal investigation that followed. If found guilty, he could be sentenced to as many as 30 years in prison. **AFP**

3 rogue Cambodian generals arrested

PHNOM PENH—Three Cambodian generals were among 10 former and current members of the military arrested for allegedly forming an armed group to commit robberies, authorities said Wednesday. The gang, which was also under suspicion for allegedly plotting attacks against the government, is thought to be behind a streak of at least 18 robberies in northwestern Cambodia, court officials said. "We are investigating whether the group would stage terrorist attacks," prosecutor Sar Yosthvirak said. The generals—Kheng Savorn, Ut Sakhorn and Men Saran—were seized Tuesday in the capital Phnom Penh, Cambodia's military police chief Sokha told **AFP**.

Saddam's deputy is next to hang

BAGHDAD—Another deputy of former leader Saddam Hussein will be given the death penalty later this month after the appeals court ruled that his previous sentence of life in prison was too lenient, a spokesperson said Tuesday. Raed Juhli, a spokesperson for the Iraqi High Tribunal, said a session will be held on Jan. 25 in which a judge will read the new verdict against former Vice President Taha Yassin Ramadan. On Nov. 5, Ramadan was convicted of premeditated murder and sentenced to life in prison. A month later, the appeals court returned his case to the High Tribunal, demanding he be sentenced to death. The court agreed to turn it to a death sentence. **AP**

Chemical train derailed

A CSX freight train carrying chemical cargo derailed and ignited south of Louisville, Ky., on Tuesday, forcing the evacuation of homes, shutting down roads and sending students home from school, Kentucky emergency officials said. There were no reported injuries, the officials said. More than a quarter of the cars on the 80-car train derailed in Brooks, Ky., about 15 miles short of its Louisville destination, just before 9 a.m. Fire broke out in 14 cars, sending billowing plumes of smoke into the air. Officials closed about 20 miles of Interstate 65 and restricted airspace over the fire, said Yvette Smith, a spokesperson for the Kentucky Division of Emergency Management. **New York Times News Service**

Israel military chief quits

JERUSALEM—The chief of Israel's armed forces has tendered his resignation after internal probes pointed to his responsibility for the setbacks of last year's Lebanon war, a military spokesperson said on Wednesday. **Reuters**



BIRTHDAY TREAT

Cynthia, a Kodiak bear, carries a salmon given to her as a special treat on her 30th birthday at Taronga Zoo in Sydney, Wednesday, Jan. 17. Kodiak bears normally live between 15 to 30 years of age in the wild, but often live longer in captivity due to the abundance of food supplies and regular veterinary care. **AP**

Ken Bono: Wise player, wise saver



Ken Bono lives and breathes basketball. 2006's UAAP's Most Valuable Player, Ken has been passionate about the sport since he was seven years old.

"I used to tag along with my uncles to neighborhood basketball games and I discovered I had a talent for the sport. It became a big part of my life as I received athletic scholarships in high school and college."

Currently a player for the Philippine Basketball League (PBL), Ken knows that apart from doing his best in every game, he also has to live up to the expectations of his followers. He religiously trains twice a day with his team mates, and during off season, he tries to focus on his schoolwork which he aims to complete in due time.

"At the moment, I earn a living from basketball, but I don't see it as a life long profession, that's why I try to make the most out of it. I do my best in every game, and I save a part of my earnings," he said.

Ken is used to spending within a given budget. When he was young, he had to wisely stretch his monthly allowance from his mother. "Because we were poor, I was a thrifty kid. I had to make sure my meager school allowance covered my transportation and meals."

To carefully monitor his expenses, Ken maintains a passbook savings account. "I prefer a passbook account because of the effort it takes to withdraw funds, passbook account holders tend to keep their money in the bank. It's a better way to make your money grow."

Ken and many others like him, who have a mindset of saving through a passbook account, is the reason that PSBank believes a savings passbook will continue to provide great value even in the electronic age. Motivated to ensure that this market segment is not under-served, PSBank enhanced its passbook product even while other banks phased-out theirs in favor of the ATM account.

PSBank, redesigned its passbook to help the bank's clients keep better track of their money and their aspirations in life. It's the only passbook available with additional space for notes that fulfills the need of many savers who add personal entries alongside passbook entries. The utility of the additional column transforms the passbook into a personal financial journal or diary, allowing amounts to come alive and become significant as the notes rekindle emotional attachment to the account holders.

The PSBank passbook can also be used to withdraw money in any PSBank branch, providing the convenience of 150 outlets nationwide. Each PSBank branch can access a central database the process is simplified and inter-branch transactions are handled fast and easy.

With the PSBank passbook account, Ken and every PSBank savings account holder can shoot for a comfortable and worry-free future knowing their hard-earned money is in good hands.

The WORLD

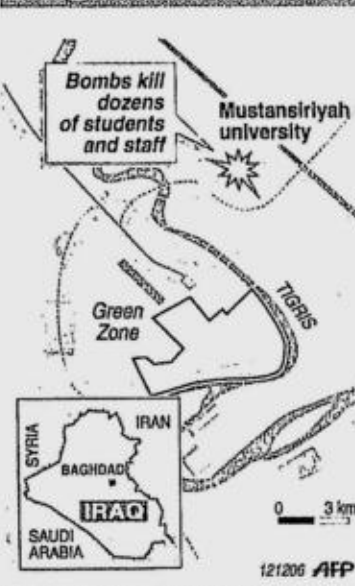
Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Baghdad university bombings kill 65



FIREMEN stand at the site of blasts outside Al-Mustansiriya university in Baghdad, Tuesday Jan. 16. Two minivans exploded near the university as students were leaving after classes Tuesday in a predominantly Shiite area of eastern Baghdad.

Baghdad attack



BAGHDAD—TWIN CAR BOMBS TORE through a leading Baghdad university as students left classes in the deadliest attack in Iraq in nearly two months, and the United Nations reported 34,452 civilians were slain last year, nearly three times more than the government reported.

A total of 142 Iraqis were killed or found dead Tuesday in what appeared to be a renewed campaign of Sunni insurgent violence against Shiite targets. The sharp increase in deadly attacks coincided with the release of UN figures that showed an average of 94 civilians died each day in sectarian fighting in 2006.

The blasts wrecked two small buses as students at Al-Mustansiriya University were lining up for the ride home, according to Taqi al-Moussawi, a university dean. At least 65 students died.

The attackers stationed a man wearing a suicide belt in the expected path of fleeing students to take even more lives, but he was spotted and shot by security men before he could blow himself up, the dean said.

"The only guilt of our martyred students is that they pursued education. They belong to all religions, sects and ethnic groups," said an angry al-Moussawi, himself a Shiite. "The terrorists want to stop education ... Those students had nothing to do with politics."

The university's well-shaded

campus occupies several square blocks in north-central Baghdad, a mostly Shiite area. The school ranks second among institutions of higher education in Iraq. Founded in 1963, it was named after one of the oldest Islamic schools, established in the 13th century during the Abbasid dynasty that ruled the Muslim world. Thousands attend the university, known especially for its colleges of science, literature and education.

Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki blamed the attack on "terrorists and Saddamists" seeking revenge for Monday's hanging of two of Saddam Hussein's top aides, who were convicted with him for the slaying of 148 Shiite men and boys after a 1982 assassination attempt in the northern town of Dujail.

The violence Tuesday against Shiites may signal a campaign by Sunni insurgents to shed as much blood as possible before the deployment of 21,500 more American troops. Most of the additional US troops will be used to back up the Iraqi army in a security sweep to rid the capital of Sunni and Shiite gunmen.

Arab states back US military buildup

KUWAIT—MODERATE ARAB states told the United States on Tuesday they supported President George W. Bush's plan for a military buildup in Iraq, hoping it would halt a slide to civil war.

Foreign ministers of six Gulf Arab states, Egypt and Jordan, all concerned that chaos in Iraq could spread to the entire region, expressed their backing for the

20,000 extra troops at talks with US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in Kuwait.

"We expressed our desire to see the president's plan to reinforce American military presence in Baghdad as a vehicle ... to stabilize Baghdad and prevent Iraq sliding into this ugly war, this civil war," Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammad al-Salem al-Sabah

told a joint news conference with Rice, who is on a regional tour to marshal support for Bush's plan.

Rice admitted the plan was unlikely to end violence quickly.

"Violent people will always be able to kill innocent people and so, even with the new security plan ... there is still going to be violence," Rice told reporters.

A statement issued after Rice

met the ministers said: "The participants welcomed the commitment by the United States as stated in President Bush's recent speech to defend the security of the Gulf, the territorial integrity of Iraq and to ensure a ... fair and inclusive political process that engages all Iraqi communities and guarantees the stability of the country."

Reuters

Corruption probe on Olmert up

JERUSALEM—ISRAEL'S CHIEF prosecutor on Tuesday ordered a criminal probe of Prime Minister Ehud Olmert over his alleged abuse of influence in the privatization of the country's second-largest bank, the justice ministry said.

The justice ministry confirms that the state prosecutor, Eran Shendar, called on the police to open a criminal investigation into a suspected offense of insider trading in the sale by the state of its majority holding in Bank Leumi, a ministry source told AFP.

Olmert, who has been hounded by allegations of corruption since before he took office last year, was informed of the decision Tuesday afternoon.

A senior official in his office said "the prime minister will fully cooperate with the investigation" and has no intention of stepping aside from his duties while it is underway.

Olmert was "very proud of the way the Bank Leumi sale had been conducted," which was with the "fullest transparency," she said.



OLMERT

REUTERS

The probe will focus on suspicions that Olmert, when acting finance minister in 2005 under former prime minister Ariel Sharon, tried to steer the sale of Bank Leumi toward his friend, Australian real estate baron Frank Lowey.

The bank was eventually sold to another company with no relation to Lowey.

Under normal procedures, any formal investigation of Olmert would have been ordered by Attorney General Menahem Mazuz, but he removed himself from the case due to the fact that his sister, Yemima Mazuz, is the legal counsel at the finance ministry.

Reports emerged last Wednesday that a criminal investigation was in the offing, with police having opened an unofficial "inspection" into the matter two months ago.

Havana still mum on Castro's health

HAVANA—CUBAN AUTHORITIES kept a stony silence on the health of ailing President Fidel Castro Tuesday, refusing to comment on reports he is in "very serious" condition after three failed operations.

Neither authorities nor official media made any mention of the article by Spain's El Pais daily, which said that Castro had suffered a serious infection in his stomach lining following a series of surgeries in recent months.

Communist Cuba has treated Castro's health as a state secret since the longtime revolutionary leader announced in July that he had undergone intestinal surgery and temporarily handed over power to his younger brother Raul Castro, 75.

In Washington, the White House played down the El Pais article, saying it amounted to "a roundup" of previous reports.

Cuban dissident Martha Beatriz Roque also dismissed the article. "The government likes to create expectations, going one way and then the other on the question of the president's condition," she told AFP.

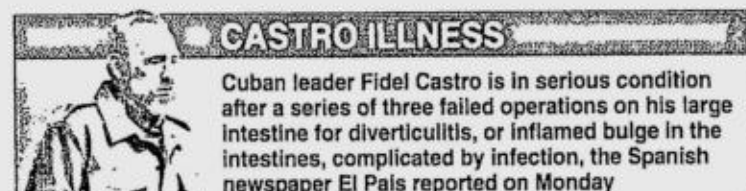
In the article, the most detailed accounting of Castro's health published to date, El Pais quoted sources at the Gregorio Maranon hospital in Madrid, whose head of surgery, Jose Luis Garcia Sabrido had examined the 80-year-old revolutionary leader in Havana last month.

But CNN quoted the Spanish doctor as saying any information that does not come straight from Castro's medical team "lacks foundation." After visiting Castro in December, Garcia Sabrido denied the Cuban leader had cancer, said he was "in a process of slow but progressive recovery" and stressed he did not need further surgery.

The Cuban president's eldest son also said in brief comments to journalists during a visit in Chile Saturday that his father's health was getting better.

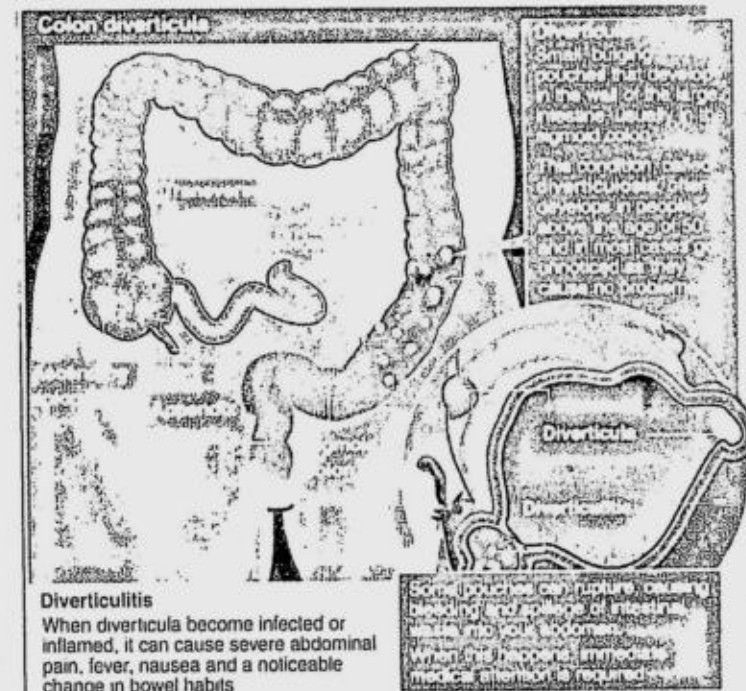
"I see him improving," said Fidel Castro Diaz Balart, a nuclear physicist and an advisor on Cuba's Council of State, popularly known as "Fidelito," or "little Fidel." In power since 1959, Fidel Castro has not been seen in public for five months—other than a few brief television appearances.

AFP



CASTRO ILLNESS

Cuban leader Fidel Castro is in serious condition after a series of three failed operations on his large intestine for diverticulitis, or inflamed bulge in the intestines, complicated by infection, the Spanish newspaper El Pais reported on Monday



Diverticulitis
When diverticula become infected or inflamed, it can cause severe abdominal pain, fever, nausea and a noticeable change in bowel habits

Source: U.S. National Library of Medicine, National Institute of Health

REUTERS

US prosecutors indict former UN official

NEW YORK—US PROSECUTORS on Tuesday indicted the former director of the scandal-tainted UN oil-for-food program in Iraq on charges of bribery and conspiracy to commit fraud in relation to the scheme.

Former executive director Benon Sevan was indicted by New York prosecutors along with Ephraim Nadler, the brother-in-law of former UN secretary general and Egyptian diplomat Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

Boutros-Ghali himself has been cleared of any wrongdoing.

Sevan is accused of receiving \$160,000 in kickbacks from the government of former Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein through Nadler, described in the indictment only as a 69-year-old from Nicosia, Cyprus.

Sevan, a Cypriot, faces up to 50 years in prison if convicted of the charges, while Nadler faces up to 112 years behind bars.

"Prior prosecutions by this office demonstrate that the former government of Iraq thoroughly corrupted the program," prosecutor Michael Garcia said in a statement unveiling the indictment.



SEVAN

AFP

BORACAY

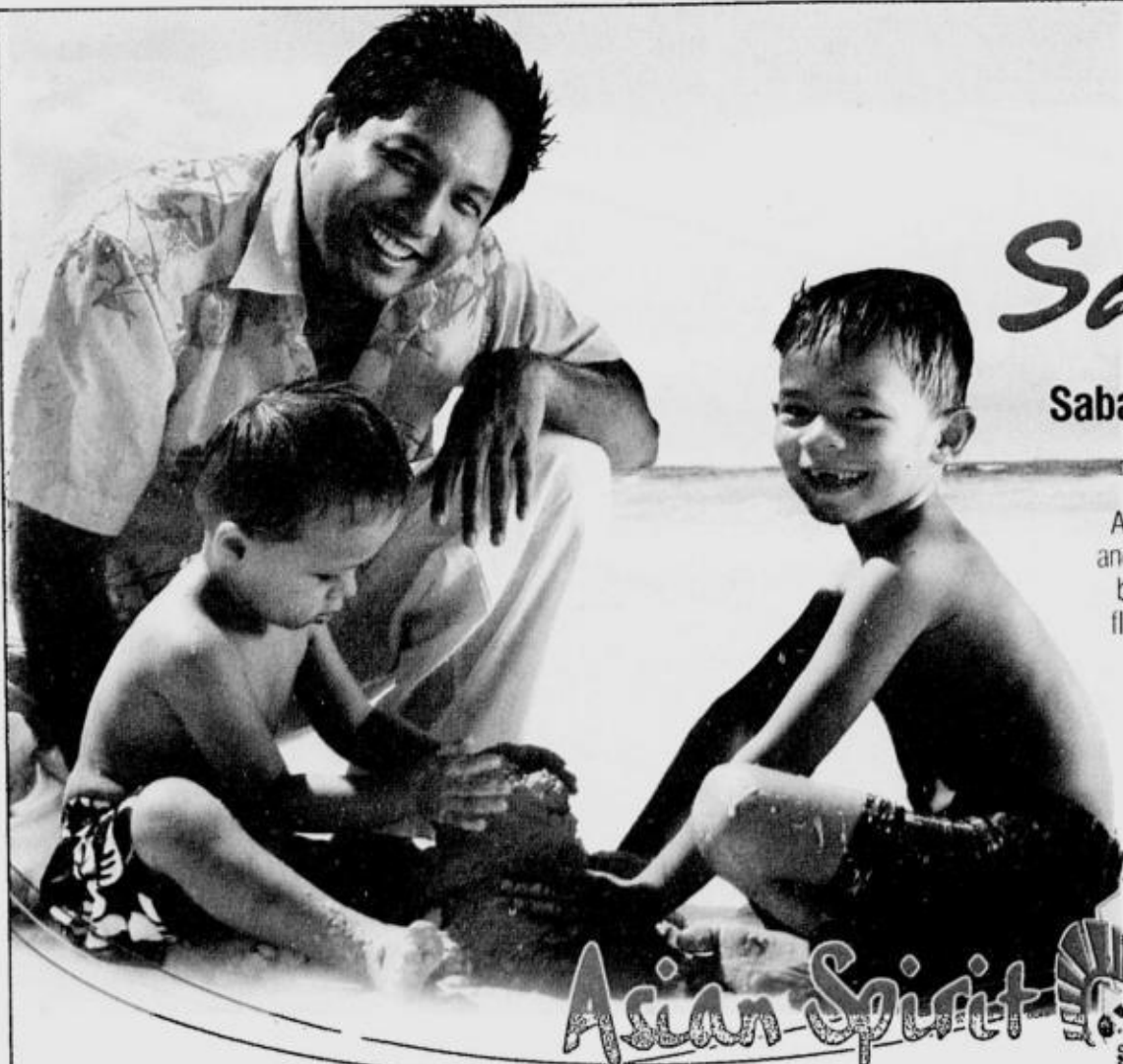
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■ **Hot Federer**
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PANGILINAN



ESTRADA

MVP, Jinggoy to meet Fiba sec-gen

By June Navarro

THE TOP OFFICIALS OF THE Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas will leave for Geneva, Switzerland, today hoping to convince the International Basketball Federation (Fiba) to lift the indefinite suspension on the Philippines

and allow it to compete in international events.

SBP president Manny V. Pangilinan and SBP chair Sen. Jinggoy Estrada will be joined by PBA chair Ricky Vargas and PBA commissioner Noli Eala in what the group describes as a "breakthrough conference" with Fiba sec-gen Patrick Bau-

mann.

Expected to join Baumann in the meeting is newly elected Fiba president Bob Elphinstone, who will fly from Australia, tomorrow.

A reliable source said the group will stop briefly in Hong Kong to meet a top official of Fiba-Asia, for a crucial gab that could smoothen

talks with Baumann.

It is this meeting, the source added, that gives the group confidence that it will succeed in convincing the sport's international governing body to accredit the SBP and lift the country's suspension.

Pangilinan and Co. will first meet MVP/A23

PSA AWARDS

Pacquiao, 7 others get top honors today

By Marc Anthony Reyes

FOR MAKING 2006 A SMASH HIT, EIGHT Filipino sports greats led by boxing legend Manny Pacquiao get the highest accolade when the sporting media stages its annual awards today.

The world's best pound-for-pound boxer is again the Philippine Sports-writers Association's Athlete of the Year. But this time he will share the spotlight with a string of local heroes who also shone internationally the past year.

Billiards' Efrén "Bata" Reyes, Ronnie Alcano and Antonio Gabica will climb the podium at the SM Mall of Asia Entertainment Hall for their various exploits that helped bring luster to RP sports the past year.

Also getting a piece of the honor are amateur boxers Joan Tipon and Violito Payla, world champion bowler Biboy Rivera and wushu artist Rene Catalan.

Gabica, Tipon, Payla and Catalan earned accolades after winning gold medals in the Doha Asian Games for the Philippines' best finish in the regional sportsfest since 1966.

The 28-year-old Pacquiao will also receive the Bayani ng Lahi award, the highest honor given by the sporting press, for taking Philippine sports to new heights with his two sensational victories over Mexican great Erik Morales.

Other athletes who excelled in their respective fields will also get recognition, including Mt. Everest summiteers Leo Oracion, Pastor Emata and Romy Garduce.

The proceedings will be aired live over Sports radio 918 and telecast over NBN-4 on a delayed basis.

Top sports officials, Philippine Olympic Committee president Peping Cojuangco, Philippine Sports Commission chair Butch Ramirez and Presidential Assistant for Youth and Sports Ali Atienza, will be the guests of honor.

PBL commissioner Chino Trinidad and three-time Southeast Asian Games karate-do champ Gretchen Malalad will host the affair which starts at 3 p.m.

Top local bands will regale the crowd including The Dawn, Mojofly, Rocksteady, Join the Club, Dream Kitchen and Pancake 80.

San Miguel Corp. Chief Operation Officer and President Ramon S. Ang will deliver an inspirational speech during the affair which is also supported by the Philippine Basketball Association, Philippine Basketball League, Welcoat Paints' Ray-

mund Yu and Terry Que, Harbour Center's Mikee Romero, Teletech, Hermie Esguerra, Air21, NBN-4 and DZSR Sports Radio.

The complete list of awardees:

ATHLETES OF THE YEAR—Manny Pacquiao, Violito Payla, Ronnie Alcano, Joan Tipon, Biboy Rivera, Antonio Gabica, Efrén "Bata" Reyes, Rene Catalan

BAYANI NG LAHI AWARD—Manny Pacquiao

MAJOR AWARDS—James Yap (pro basketball), Ken Bono (amateur basketball), Juvic Pagunsan (pro golf), Dottie Ardina (amateur golf), Santy Barnachea (cycling), JB Hernandez (horseracing), Real Spicy (horseracing)

PSA PRESIDENT'S AWARD—Leo Oracion, Pastor Emata,



PACQUIAO: Bayani ng Lahi Awardee

ANTONIO SIDDAYAO AWARD—Cyna Rodriguez, Mia Legaspi, Wesley So

CITATIONS—Marie Antoinette Rivero, Tshomlee Go, Maria Marna Pabillore, Eduard Fola Yang, Jeffrey "Bata" de Luna, Cecil Mamiit, Eric Taino, Kathleen Allora, Veronica Domingo, Manuel Rivero Jr, Godfrey Castro, Jenibert Basadre, Michael Bibat, Noel Espinosa, Ramon S. Ang-SMC, Debbie de Villa, Ryan Mendoza, Francisco "Django" Bustamante, AF3, Wushu team, Erlina Pecante, Enrique Rafael Rosales, Mateo Guidicelli, Dragon Boat team, Yen Makabenta, Juanito Mingarino, Daniel Damaso, Philippine Football Federation, NBN-4, DZSR Sports Radio, MAS-CO, Amaya Paz

SPECIAL AWARD—Recah Trinidad and Anvil Publishing

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD—Florencio Campomanes

HALL OF FAME—Eugene Torre

POSTHUMOUS AWARDS—Ben Arda, Bert Cuevas, Carlos Santos, Bana Sailani, Alex Arroyo, Redan Lopez, Rodrigo Abaquita, Deo Espinosa, Willy Victoria

MOST OUTSTANDING NSAS—Billiards, Boxing

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Ayong Lorenzo Marc Santiago Zaldy Sandoval
Loy Palmares Sam La Luma Jun Marasigan
(partial list)

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Jeff Hudspeth, NORTH CAROLINA Cris Nesmith, ALABAMA
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Joe Stanfield, CALIFORNIA Speedy Gonzales, CALIFORNIA
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Baby Evangelista, CALIFORNIA
Thomas Miskosh, GERMANY
Herman Castellejos, HAWAII
(partial list)

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RP booters draw with Myanmar

BANGKOK—OVERPOWERED IN THE PAST two outings; the Philippines registered its first point in the Asean Football Championships Tuesday night when it held powerhouse Myanmar to a scoreless draw at the Army Stadium here.

With keeper Michael Casas and the back four in inspirational form, the Filipinos constantly frustrated the Burmese side badly needing a win to keep its hopes of making the knockout stages, after Thailand had defeated Malaysia, 1-0, at the Suphachalasai Stadium.

But it was Ariel Zerrudo and Alvin Valeroso who almost snatched the game-winner in injury time and coach Aris Caslib said it was the lack of quality match exposure for the Filipino booters that led to the draw.

A minute into added time, Zerrudo rushed down the left flank but instead of squaring the ball to an unmarked Chris Greatwich, he blasted the ball into the side-netting from the tightest of angles. Moments later, Valeroso spurned another great chance when he volleyed wide, after pouncing on Greatwich's lofted pass.

The outcome meant Thailand taking top Group A honors with seven points and Malaysia getting the second semifinal berth with four points. Myanmar is third with three points.

"We could have taken the match. I'm proud of my players," Caslib said.

Forgettable campaign

Except for the draw against 154th-ranked Myanmar, the reigning Merdeka Cup champion, it was rather a forgettable campaign for the Filipinos.

They got thumped by Malaysia and Thailand with similar 4-0 scores and lost captain Aly Borromeo to a knee injury eight minutes into the tournament. While the Filipinos scored four goals in four matches in the 2004 edition in Kuala Lumpur, they were shut out in all three games here.

"The general characteristic of our development is in progress right now," said Caslib, who also missed top striker Phil Younghusband, the top scorer in the Asean Qualifiers in Bacolod.

But it was Casas' sterling play that caught the fancy of everyone else at the Army Stadium. After letting in eight goals in the first two matches, Casas was a virtual wall against Myanmar, thwarting Si Thu Win thrice and Zaw Lynn Tun twice.

The Danao City-born keeper dove to his left to keep out Win's 30-yard piledriver in the 73rd minute and stopped a header from Tun in the ensuing corner. Three minutes later Casas was beaten by Win but the Burmese forward's shot rattled the wrong side of the crossbar.

Another free header from Win in the 80th minute forced a good save from Casas.

Valeroso almost scored in the 50th minute when he latched on Anton del Rosario's headed pass but two Myanmar defenders were there to derail the attack.

Six minutes later, San Beda College's Jeff Lim also came close when his one-time volley from a del Rosario throw sailed inches wide.

"We are moving forward," said Caslib. "Our back four—Japheth Sablon, Phil Greatwich, del Rosario and Alvin Ocampo and Casas made it easier for us. We were very fortunate."

Cedelf P. Tupas



TOYOTA Otis' Marvin Cruz tries to wriggle out of the defense put up by Teletech's Francis Mercado and Roberto Labagala in their Silver Cup game Tuesday.

Harbour Centre, Hapee seek tie for s'final seats

HARBOUR CENTER HAS THE EASIER TASK THAN HAPEE Toothpaste-PCU when they tackle separate rivals seeking ties for semifinal berths today in the 2007 PBL Silver Cup at the Emilio Aguinaldo College gym.

With identical 6-3 records behind the 7-3 marks of Mail N More and Toyota Otis, the Port Masters and the Teeth Masters are hoping to forge playoff duels for the two outright semifinal slots given to the top finishers at the end of the elimination round.

Harbour Center is an odds-on choice over winless Kettle Korn-University of Santo Tomas in the 2 p.m. opener although coach Jorge Gallent is not taking the Pop Kings for granted.

"We can never tell, the winds might change directions and we got beaten by a team which lost all its nine games so far," said Gallent. "That would be very embarrassing."

Hapee ended a three-game losing skid by beating Kettle Korn recently but the Teeth Masters face at 4 p.m. a CL Pera Padala squad,

STANDINGS	W	L
Mail N More	7	3
Toyota Otis	7	3
H. Centre	6	3
Hapee-PCU	6	3
Henkel Sista	6	4
CL Pera	4	5
Padala		
TeleTech	4	6
Magnolia	3	7
Kettle Korn	0	9

GAMES TODAY
(EAC gym)
2 p.m.—Harbour Centre vs Kettle Korn
4 p.m.—CL-Pera Padala vs Hapee-PCU

which has four wins in nine games so far.

If Harbour Centre and Hapee prevail, the pairings for the two-game playoff based on the quotient system would be Harbour against Toyota and Mail N More against Hapee.

The losers will drop to the quarterfinal round where they will enjoy twice-to-beat advantages over their respective opponents.

If Harbour wins and Hapee loses today, the Port Masters will take the first semis berth due to a better quotient with Mail & More and Toyota Otis colliding for the last semis ticket.

The Comets and Sparks, however, will be marching to the next round if Harbour and Hapee both lose today. Marc Anthony Reyes

Asiad medalists get inside track on Olympic berths

By June Navarro

ATHLETES BELONGING TO THE 14 priority sports and who made the country proud in the recent Asian Games have the inside track of entering the pool of medal prospects for the Olympics.

Philippine Sports Commission chair William "Butch" Ramirez said the medal winners in the Doha, Qatar Asiad are included in the list of 40 athletes to be sent abroad for long-term specialized training in a bid to win the first-ever Olympic gold medal in Beijing next year.

Except for two cue artists, a golfer and two karatekas, Ramirez assured that the rest of the Asiad winners would be given top priority when the PSC and the Philippine Olympic Committee prune down the roster of Olympic medal potentials within the next few days.

Antonio Gabica, who won a gold in the nine-ball event and a silver in the eight-ball billiards competitions, will sit out the Beijing joust along with nine-ball silver medalist Jeffrey De Luna since billiards is not an Olympic event.

The same holds true for golfer Michael Bibat and karatekas Maria Pabillore and Noel Espinosa. Pabillore landed a silver in women's karatedo while Espinosa and Bibat copped the bronze in their respective events.



JOAN TIPON

"The list would be finalized after the POC tackles the issue with the national sports associations belonging to the priority sports that we identified," Ramirez said.

PSC and POC officials picked boxing, taekwondo, archery, track and field, swimming, diving, gymnastics, weightlifting, lawn tennis, shooting, fencing, beach volleyball, rowing and wushu as the disciplines which would most likely bring glory to the country in the Olympiad.

Asian Games boxing gold medalists Joan Tipon and Violito Payla lead the cast of Olympic aspirants along with fellow boxers Genebert Basadre and Godfrey Castro, who both snared bronze medals in their categories.

Taekwondo-jins Mary Antoinette Rivero (silver), Tshomlee Go (silver), Manuel Rivero Jr. (bronze), Kathleen Eunice Allora (bronze) and Veronica Domingo (bronze) are on the priority list.

Wushu Asian Games champ Rene Catalan and Edward Felayang (silver) will also be considered.

They will join tennis players Cecil Mamiit and Eric Taino, beach volleyballers Heidi Ilustre and Diane Pascua, who are all Olympic-bound on the strength of their world rankings (Mamiit and Taino) the number of games they played in the international circuit (Ilustre and Pascua).

Gomez, Peña enter Norway 8-ball tilt

RISING POOL STARS JHAROME Peña and Roberto Gomez hope to gain more international spurs when they compete in The 8-Ball Battle of Scandinavian billiards tournament starting today at the Elbowroom in Oslo, Norway.

Gomez and Peña will play against some of the world's best cue artists in the four-day event offering a champion purse of 15,000 euros (around P1 million).

The two were invited to represent the Philippines in the event after their impressive showing in the World Pool Championship (WPC) hosted by the country last year.

A former news reporter for a local television network, Gomez stole the spotlight during the early stages of the WPC when he defeated former US Open champion Corey Deuel, John Wims and Masaaki Tanaka in group play and emerged as top seed going into the tournament's knockout phase.

He lost to eventual champion

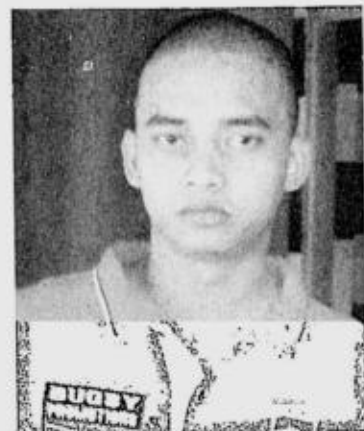


ROBERTO GOMEZ

and Bugsy stablemate Ronato Alcano in the Round of 64.

"The WPC was my first taste of international competition, and although I did not fare well, I feel that I have learned a lot of lessons from it. With the experience, I hope to do better in the Scandinavian," said the 27-year-old Zamboangaño.

Like Gomez, Peña also had some



JHAROME PEÑA

shining moments in the WPC. He almost made it to the Last 16 before losing a tight match to English snooker legend Steve Davis.

"The organizers handpicked Gomez and Peña for the tournament based on their performance in the World Pool," said Bugsy Promotions head Ceferino "Perry" Mariano.

Gomez's and Peña's participation is supported by Department of Tourism Secretary Ace Durano, and Assistant Secretary Cynthia Carrion.

Over 100 players are participating in the tournament, including former world champions Ralf Souquet and Thorsten Hohmann, and 2007 Derby City Classic 9-Ball champ Niels Feijen and Marcus Chamat of Sweden.

Peña will campaign in Group 6, where he will play against Imran Majid (England), Ivica Putnik (Croatia), Almin Salkic (Sweden), Thomas Engert (Germany), Ronny Oldervik (Norway), Mats Schjetne (Norway) and Tom Bjerke (Norway).

Gomez is in Group 11 with Rolf Jensen (Norway), Karl Lind (Sweden), Michael Schmidt (Germany), Matey Ullah (Norway), Ola Jonsen (Norway), Per Yngvar Hodnebrog (Norway) and Lars Wibe (Norway). Marlon Bernardino

SPORTSWATCH

FBL registration ends Jan. 27

INTERESTED TEAMS HAVE UNTIL JAN. 27 TO REGISTER FOR THE FUTURES Basketball League's (FBL) 3-on-3 Baller Battle set to start on Feb. 4 at the Ateneo de Manila covered courts. Featuring seven age group categories for boys and girls, the other playing dates and venue for the tournament are Feb. 11 at the La Salle Greenhills covered courts and Feb. 18 at the Xavier covered courts. The finals will be held at the Ateneo covered courts. Registration is going on at the Futures office at 138 West Ave. in Quezon City with the registration fee set at P1,500 per team. For details, call 633-3358 project director Nino Sino.

LPC cockfest draws 150 entries

ABOUT 150 PARTICIPANTS FROM CAVITE, LAGUNA AND METRO MANILA converge today at Las Pinas Coliseum as the Fastest Win One-Cock Timbangan gets underway at noon with 75 fights. According to hosts Paul Olegario and Baldo Perez, the fastest win champion will be chosen after every ten fights and will get a guaranteed prize of P20,000. Participants may register from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m. Another special 3-cock derby follows on Saturday with P250,000 at stake for an entry fee of P5,500, and with Rocky Clave as host. LPC's regular hacklights are scheduled from Monday to Sunday, with the first 20 winners getting a bonus of P1,000. An average of 100 fights are being held on weekends, and 60 fights on weekdays, said coliseum manager Alex Tobias. For inquiries, call 873-1040 and 874-3910 or 0926-7450375 (Julius).

Pacquiao gets honor at World Slasher

AS PART OF THE ARANETA COLISEUM'S GRAND TRADITION OF HONORING the performers and sportsmen who have graced its grounds, reigning World Boxing Council International Super Featherweight champion Manny Pacquiao will be awarded a plaque of appreciation by Quezon City Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr. for his outstanding contribution to sports. The ceremony will be held at the Araneta Coliseum at 8 p.m. today as the boxing hero is also a celebrated participant in the biggest derby event of the year, the 2007 World Slasher Cup.

Batawang headlines 'Sinulog' fight card

WORLD BOXING ASSOCIATION No. 13 Bert Batawang will headline a big 'Sinulog' fight card this Sunday as he takes on veteran journeyman Flash Villacura of Davao in a ten-round brawl at the Gaisano Country Mall carpark in Banilad, Cebu City.

Batawang will use this fight as his tune-up bout before a possible crack at WBO junior flyweight champion Hugo Cazares at the World Cup of boxing also slated in Cebu middle of this year.

Batawang had fought thrice last year, ending each via sensational stoppage and logging in only a total of six rounds in these

fights. The chief support will pit former RP flyweight champ and RP No. 6 flyweight Federico Catubay of SGG Stable, holder of the PBF 108-lb title, against Wakee Salud's Pingping Tepura in another ten-round battle.

The rest of the card pits Rogan Flores against Allan Dugang (8 rounds); Rashid Bacus versus Nelson Llanos (8 rds); Gil Melling against Ricky Sismundo (6 rds); Nic Banal versus Ranie Pamartian (4 rds); and Mark John Yap versus Daryl Amoncio (4 rds). Salven L. Lagumbay, contributor



NBC TELECAST: National Basketball Conference and Basketball TV (BTV) have tied up for the telecast of NBC's Game of the Week in the next conference of the regional cagefest. Signing contracts, from left, are Waffles Marketing president Auty Villarama, BTV vice president for sales Nitoy Nocos, NBC president Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla and Mayor Bambol Tolentino, NBC executive vice president. Standing are BTV marketing manager Rely San Agustin and BTV senior account manager Neil Portillo.

Manny Pacquiao Warriors join NBC caging

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—THE MP Warriors of Filipino boxing superstar Manny "Pac-Man" Pacquiao is joining the National Basketball Conference (NBC), which kicks off its fourth season on March 10.

The signing of the memorandum of agreement was made last Monday at the mansion of Pacquiao, who immediately paid the participation fee of P550,000 to NBC secretary-general Tito Palma.

It was witnessed by MP Warriors team manager Raides "Nonoy" Neri and assistant team manager Romy "Amay" Neri Jr.

"We're so happy to have Pacman GenSan, making the NBC much stronger here in Mindanao," Palma said.

The other teams from Mindanao are the North Cotabato Braves, Iligan Crusaders, Pagadian Explorers, Valencia Golden Harvest, Montaña Davao and back-to-back champion Ozamis Cotta.

Other NBC teams are Tribu Sugbu Cebu, Osmeña Cebu, Batang Tagaytay, Spring Malabon, San Juan and Quezon Province.

The MP Warriors previously played in the Mindanao Visayas Basketball Association

(MVBA) and won the Mindanao division title in the First Conference last year.

The MP Warriors will still be mentored by head coach Ramon "Nonoy" Pido with Choy del Rosario and Perig Alicante as the assistant coaches.

The players are Louie Medalla, Rolly Menor, Jaypee Locsin, Weng Faruchilen, Dondon Tadena, Jasper Callo, Joselito Celis, Zandro Cabanlit, Miller Dennison, Balong Ramos, Peter Deligero, Apol Coronado, Jethron Recustodio, Forty Sumampong and Boris Mejorada. Lito delos Reyes

Unknown teeners pace RP Ladies Little Debbie falters

By Musong R. Castillo

STA. ROSA, LAGUNA—TEENERS PUT THEMSELVES IN THE ICTSI PHILIPPINE Ladies Open golf mix early, but sadly, defending champion Debbie de Villa was not among them.

Malaysian junior ace Ainil Johani Abu Bakar and University of San Francisco freshman Kathleen Uy, both 17, fired two-under-par 70s for a one-shot lead over three foreigners and Fil-American Cristina Corpus at the wind-swept The Country Club course here.

Abu Bakar birdied the first three par-5s before stumbling with her lone bogey on No. 14 for a 34-36 card while Uy made the most out of gentler conditions in the afternoon to shoot five birdies against three bogeys in her nines of 33-37.

Slowed down considerably by a viral infection that has stumped her doctors so far, Little Debbie, meanwhile, all but kissed her title-retention bid goodbye after soaring to an 85.

"She's so weak but she just does not want to quit," mother Lilibeth told the INQUIRER. "She is playing against doctor's orders."

The 15-year-old Debbie, who won this tournament last year at the posh Manila Golf Club, opted to defend her title even without the benefit of practice the past week.

The course played to only 6,049 yards, but conditions were tough in the morning due to rains the whole of Tuesday night that rendered the fairways damp and made the greens trickier than they already are.

Dottie Ardina and Mia Piccio, two of the brightest young talents in the Philippine pool, struggled on the greens and turned in 73s, one behind compatriot Regina de Guzman and Indonesian Andani, who churned out level 72s.

Piccio, the 15-year-old from Bacolod who was runner-up to Frances Bonadid in the match play Philippine Women's championship at the Marapara last year, hit 15 greens but bogeyed the three greens she missed.

"The speed of the greens were very

hard to read," Piccio, now in home study to pursue a golf career, said. "There was no problem in determining the breaks. It's just the speed which ruined my round."

Corpus was joined in second place by Yupaporn Kawinpakorn of Thailand and Indons Agnes Retno Sudjastin and Lidya Ivana Jaya.

"The course was not that long, it was in putting where I struggled," Uy, who finished in the bottom half at Manila Golf last year, said. "The greens were very tricky. I had no problem with my long game. Hopefully, I can get a better read (in the final two rounds)."

Former winners Carmelette Villoroman and Aileen Rose Yao also struggled, shooting a 76 and a 78, respectively, and would need to make up a lot of ground today to be in contention.

Junior World champion Cyna Rodriguez also shot a 78 even as Lora Roberto, who blew a five-stroke lead in the final round three years ago to lose to the Fil-Australian Bonadid at Manila Golf, ballooned to an 81.

The tournament is being held under the auspices of the Women's Golf Association of the Philippines with support coming from ICTSI, San Miguel, Pagcor, PSC, Electrobus/Callaway, Creative Synergy, Bostik, Bank of Commerce, TNT Express, Congressman Duavit, Comworks and Jeweler.

Juriah of Indonesia also turned in a 73, while Thais Thidapa Suwannapura and Chayuda Singhsuwan fired 74 and 75, respectively.

Anyia Tanpinco, a member of the RP team that competed in the Doha Asian Games last month, carded a 77 like Fil-American Daffodil Sanchez.

Irina Gabasa of Alta Vista in Cebu, Malaysian Michelle Ting Seaa Cheen and Paulina Sotto.



DE VILLA blasts out of the sand trap.

EDWIN BACASMAS

Final 20 RP Open slots disputed at Sherwoods

THE FINAL 20 LOCAL SLOTS FOR THE 91st Philippine Open's main draw will be up for grabs in a 36-hole qualifying tournament slated Jan. 23 at Sherwood Hills in Trece Martirez City in Cavite.

Registration for the qualifier, which was given by the Asian Tour to the Touring Professional Golfers Association of the Philippines (TPGAP), will be up until the end of office hours on Saturday.

Inquiries can be coured through (0920)927-0575.

Former RP Open champion Robert Pactolerin, senior veteran Mario Siodina and Danny Zarate are already entered.

After the RP Open qualifying, those who wish to earn TPGAP cards will be playing another 36 holes on Jan. 24.

The RP Open, which now serves as the third leg of the Asian Tour, will be played Feb. 1-4 at Wack Wack's East course.

Australian Scott Strange is the defending champion.

Mariano stops So, climbs to second in Asian Zonals

GRANDMASTER NELSON MARIANO II trounced International Master Wesley So in the seventh round late Tuesday to seize solo second place in the 2007 Asian Zonal 3.3 Chess Championship in Phu Quoc, Kien Giang, Vietnam.

Playing white, Mariano, a former Asian junior champion, toppled So in 44 moves of their Sicilian duel to raise his total to 5.0 points in the 9-round Swiss system tournament which rewards world championships slots to the top two placers.

Vietnamese GM Le Quang Liem downed IM Oliver Dimakiling in 78 moves of a Queen's Indian Defense to strengthen his hold of top spot with 6.5 points with two rounds remaining.

The unbeaten Le will face the 33-year-old Mariano in the penultimate round needing only a draw to secure a world championships berth. Mariano is also unscathed with three wins and four draws.

The 13-year-old So absorbed his first defeat after three wins and the same number of draws. With 4.5 points, So dropped into a nine-way



MARIANO

logjam for third spot.

So will play GM Dao Thien Hai of the host country in the eighth round of this biennial meet that attracted 43 players from six countries.

Also tied for third were Dimakiling, IM Darwin Laylo, national masters Nouri Hamed and Oliver Barbosa and four Vietnamese.

Laylo downed Vietnamese Fide Master Duong The Anh while Hamed and Barbosa agreed to halve the point.

GM Rogelio Antonio and IM Ronald Dableo likewise drew their Round 7 match, while GM Eugene Torre

trounced local bet Nguyen Thien Viet to share the 12th to 20th spot with six others with 4.0 points each.

GM Mark Paragua, the tournament top seed with an Elo rating of 2573, settled for a truce with Vietnam's Nguyen Van Hai to improve to 3.5 points in a tie for the 21st spot with eight others.

The only other Filipino player in the field, NM Julius Joseph de Ramos, stayed in 41st place with 2.0 points after losing to Dominic Lo Kin Mun of Singapore.

In women's play, WNM Catherine Perena suffered her second straight setback, this time to WGM Mongontul Bathuyag of Mongolia. The loss kept Perena's aggregate at 3.5 points.

WIM Beverly Mendoza, WFM Sheerie Joy Lomibao, and WNM Christy Bernales bowed to Vietnam's Tran Thi Kim Loan, Dang Bich Ngoc, and Le Thi Ha, respectively, while Kimberly Cunanan yielded to Singapore's Jeslin Tay Li-Jin. WFM Le Thanh Tu downed fellow Vietnamese WIM Le Kieu Thien Kim to remain on top with 6.5 points. **Marlon Bernardino**

Baguio hosts Rotary golfest

BAGUIO CITY—PROMINENT ROTARIANS, led by RGFFP (Rotary Golfing Fellowship Foundation of the Philippines) chair emeritus and RI director Paeng Hechanova, are vying in the ongoing 21st annual RGFFP golf tournament at the Baguio Country Club and Camp John Hay courses here.

Other well-known participants in the four-day are Secretary Silvestre Bello, Ambassador Vidal Querol, "Tito Sen" Vicente Sotto, Chair Paqui Ortigas, Governors Ato Magadia of Waterfront, Danny Yu of Copacabana Group and guest Jun Tan of Best Western.

BCC general manager Anthony de Leon and John Hay manager Jeric Hechanova have assured participants that their respective clubs would do everything to make the annual tourney a huge success. The event ends on Jan. 21.

RGFFP president Poch Borromeo and committee chair PP Nonoy Braga and PP Albert Que have put up "hole-in-one offerings" on 17 par-3 holes.

These are P1 million cash each for five holes, a Toyota Vios for one hole, OSIM massage chair for three holes, a Club Car golf kart for one hole, a set of Titleist irons for four holes and one staking OSIM's one squeeze and one pamper massage appliances.

For on-site registration, call Pauline Sevilla at 0920-9199000.

MVP, Jingoy to meet Fiba . . .

From page A21

with Baumann before holding a second meeting with Baumann and Elphinston.

After getting the Fiba nod, the SBP hopes to meet the deadline for fielding a team for the Southeast Asian Basketball Association (Seaba) championship.

Scheduled in July with Kuala Lumpur as host, the Seaba is the qualifying tournament for the Asian championship to be held in Saitama, Japan, later this year.

Pangilinan and Estrada announced last week that the SBP has already fulfilled the requirements of the communique which the Basketball Association of the Philippines and Pilipinas Basketball officials signed in the presence of Baumann in Tokyo, Japan, last September.

Estrada is expected to be back with Pangilinan and Co. by Sunday.

Former BAP president Joey Lina and PB leader Bernie Atienza had signed the Tokyo communique, which required both organizations to form a three-man panel and create a unified basketball body.

With Pangilinan joining Lina and Atienza, the three crafted the constitution and by-laws of the SBP. But when the panel was about to name the officers of the SBP, Lina stepped down as BAP president.

Estrada succeeded Lina and finished the unification talks by striking an agreement with Pangilinan last month. But the Estrada-Pangilinan deal didn't sit well with the BAP executive board, which ousted the Senator as its president.

Just the same, Pangilinan and Estrada continued the unification process and announced that a unity congress will be held on Feb. 5 for all the major stakeholders of the sport.

Realtors pass character test

NO ONE CAN IMAGINE the amount of blood, sweat and tears that went into Santa Lucia's overtime victory over Air 21 in the knockout match of the wild card series recently.

More than the chance to qualify to the quarter-finals, for Sta. Lucia governor Buddy Encarnado, the coaching staff and the players, what was at stake in the game was pride and self-respect.

If they had to kill themselves to win the match against the Express, who had clobbered them in their first encounter, they would have done it, if only to preserve the dignity of the team.

IN HUDDLE



Beth Celis

Uncharacteristically, the Realtors started the season on a high note, streaking to the top of the team standings early in the eliminations. For a time they were tagged as the team to beat.

Then something happened and they began to skid. It happened so fast that before they knew it, they had landed among the wild card cast.

Buddy just couldn't believe the drastic reversal of fortunes. His happiness was short-lived.

With the losses naturally came much conflict and irritation among the players and between the players and the coach. There were questions, there were doubts among almost everybody.

Before things could come to a head, however, Buddy stepped into the picture and nipped the brewing state of crisis in the bud.

"We have to get our acts together if we want to save ourselves from total embarrassment," Buddy told the Realtors, realizing that his team would be the laughing stock of the entire basketball community if it is ousted from the next round.

Right then and there, he decided to forego his annual vacation with his family in Baguio to declare a state of calamity.

There would be no holiday for everyone, he told the Realtors. "There will only be rigid daily workouts starting Dec. 26 until our first game in the wild card series!"

Everyone complied with nary a whimper.

But on Jan. 3, the day of their first match against Air 21, the universe deemed it wasn't time for them to reap the fruits of their Yuletide labor. They trailed woefully all throughout the game and when the final buzzer sounded, everyone must have been relieved that the game was over.

Luckily, they were given a second chance to redeem themselves, but so was Air 21.

Just before the rematch, Buddy exerted all efforts to prepare the team for the battle royale, this time mentally and psychologically. Even broadcaster Ronnie Nathanielsz, a great resource speaker, was invited to give a pep talk to the Realtors, Marlou Aquino being his godson in marriage.

On the day of the actual game, Buddy recited a short prayer and crossed his fingers. Despite all the mental preparation, his army was not exactly physically fit for battle. Marlou was nursing a sprained ankle, Kenneth Duremdes had dislocated his small finger, Paolo Mendoza was suffering from a bone spur in the sole of his foot, Catli was running a high fever, Mark Ysip was down with the flu and team captain Dennis Espino was in a hospital suffering from a long list of ailments which included tendonitis and inability to urinate. (They later find out that he had kidney stones.)

To Buddy's mild shock, everyone reported for active duty at the Coliseum, including Dennis who had to escape from the Medical City to be with his team.

"I never thought we would make it. Everyone was sick, para kaming mga manok na napeste. Our victory was virtually a miracle," Buddy recounted.

Buddy's eyes were bloodshot when the game was over, an icepack placed at the nape of his neck by one of the utility boys.

Buddy said his body had felt very, very hot during the closing minutes of overtime he needed an icepack to cool him down.

Despite the abnormal rise in temperature though, Buddy was very happy. His boys had played their heart and lungs out. They passed the test of character, they had redeemed their self-respect.

Not long after, his cellphone rang. It was Boss Exie Robles calling from his hotel room in Cebu where he had watched the game. Like Buddy he was ecstatic over the hard-earned victory. He told him the excitement and tension were such his blood pressure soared.

Exie also told Buddy that he was, at that very moment, holding an icepack at the nape of his neck.

Solar-BTV to air NBC tilt

THE NATIONAL BASKETBALL CONFERENCE HAS forged a deal to have NBC's Game of the Week aired every Saturday on Solar Sports' Basketball TV. NBC president Nathaniel "Tac" padilla, league EVP Tagyatay Mayor Bambol Tolentino and NBC secretary general Tito Palma sealed the agreement with BTV vice president for sales Nitoy Nocos, marketing manager Rely San Agustin and senior accountant Neil Portillo recently. The deal with Solar-BTV was negotiated by Waffle Marketing president Auty Villarama and marketing coordinator Peey delos Reyes. NBC's regular games will be aired on Viva Prime Channel at 2 p.m. from Monday to Friday and 8 p.m. every Sunday. NBC's fourth season is set to kick off March 10 at the Quezon Convention Center in Lucena City.



CAGE OPENER: Ambassador Dr. Wu Hsin Hsing, Taipei Economic and Cultural Affairs representative to the Philippines, makes the ceremonial toss to open the 31st edition of the Hitachi-Metro Manila Tiong Lian Basketball Association at the Chiang Kai Shek College gym recently.

SPORTS

Hot Federer torches foe

Roddick, Williams, Safin lead top seeds' blitz

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA—THE EARLY JITTERS are over.

Roger Federer, Andy Roddick and Serena Williams all posted straight-set victories Wednesday to advance to the third round of the Australian Open, serving notice that they're rounding into form after some opening-match nerves and glitches.

Roddick and Williams set up showdowns with tough opponents. Sixth-seeded Roddick beat Frenchman Marc Gicquel, 6-3, 7-6 (4), 6-4 and next faces 2005 Australian Open champion Marat Safin, who is seeded 26th while rebounding from a knee injury that kept him from defending his title last year.

Safin was shaky in going the distance for the second consecutive match, benefiting from a rain break to rally from a set down to oust Dudi Sela of Israel, 6-3, 5-7, 4-6, 7-6 (4), 6-0, in a match with 20 service breaks.

Play was halted with Safin serving at 5-6, 30-30 in the final set. After the roof was closed, Safin came out sharp, serving an ace on the first point and running through the tiebreaker against Sela, who lived down to his No. 202 ranking the rest of the way.

"When I saw the draw, I think I expected to play Marat," said Roddick, who got plenty of practice on his groundstrokes against Gicquel while tossing in a few forays to the net.

"I think we're both maybe better than a third-round matchup against each other. But that's the way it shakes out."

Williams, a two-time champion here but unseeded after dealing with a knee injury of

her own, will play No. 5 Nadia Petrova. She relished the prospect.

"It's definitely a step up," she said. "I feel excited to go into the match. I feel ready."

In a two-week Grand Slam, the key is to survive the first rounds without expending too much energy. After Tuesday's broiling conditions, players were happy to see a cloudy day where temperatures were cool by comparison.

Top-ranked Federer generated his own heat, ripping six forehand winners in the first three games while dominating Jonas Bjorkman of Sweden, 6-2, 6-3, 6-2.

"I think I was pretty much in control of the match today," said Federer, seeking his 10th Grand Slam title and third in a row. "It was a good match from my side. I think it's a bit of an improvement."

He had a stretch of three service games spanning the second and third sets when he did not allow a point. But always a perfectionist, Federer berated himself after errors and took practice swings to make sure he didn't repeat the mistakes.



HANTUCHOVA AP



KIRILENKO AP

Federer served for the match just as the sun broke through the clouds briefly. On match point, he jumped high for an overhead. Bjorkman got it back, only to have Federer whack another overhead, this time out of reach.

Federer will meet US Open semifinalist Mikhail Youzhny in the third round after the 25th-seeded Russian beat Lu Yen-hsen of Taiwan, 7-5, 6-4, 6-4. Next could be No. 14-seeded Novak Djokovic, who beat Feliciano Lopez in straight sets.

Roddick is always a little twitchy, constantly tugging at the shoulders of his shirt, adjusting his baseball cap and bouncing the ball 13 times or more before serving. But once the points began, he was all business.

He and Gicquel engaged in long rallies, moving each other from sideline to sideline. The Frenchman won one 34-shot rally, pumping his fist toward the sky, but it wasn't enough.

Williams, who won the last of her seven Grand Slam titles here in 2005, rallied from 1-4 in the tiebreaker in her 7-6 (4), 6-2 win over Luxembourg's Anne Kremer.

"I think I got a little bit off to a slow start

in the first set, and then I was making a tremendous amount of errors. I just couldn't get the balls in for some reason," Williams said. "And the second set I was making more shots and I was playing just more what I had planned, more of the game that I had practiced."

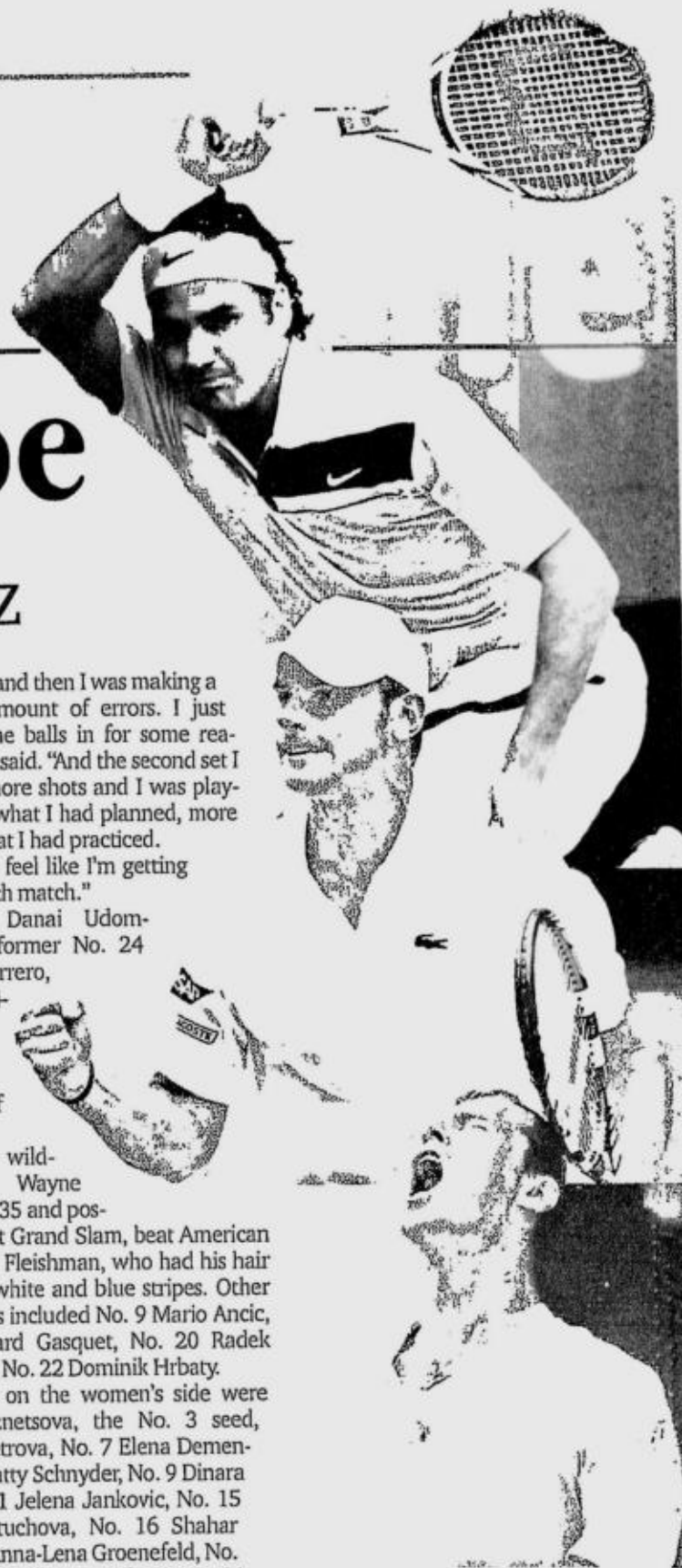
"I definitely feel like I'm getting better with each match."

Thailand's Danai Udomchoke upset former No. 24 Juan Carlos Ferrero, 7-6 (0), 7-5, 4-6, 6-1, to take another former world No. 1 out of the equation.

Australia wildcard entry Wayne Arthurs, aged 35 and possibly in his last Grand Slam, beat American qualifier Zach Fleishman, who had his hair dyed in red, white and blue stripes. Other men's winners included No. 9 Mario Ancic, No. 18 Richard Gasquet, No. 20 Radek Stepanek and No. 22 Dominik Hrbaty.

Advancing on the women's side were Svetlana Kuznetsova, the No. 3 seed, along with Petrova, No. 7 Elena Dementieva, No. 8 Patty Schnyder, No. 9 Dinara Safina, No. 11 Jelena Jankovic, No. 15 Daniela Hantuchova, No. 16 Shahar Peer, No. 17 Anna-Lena Groenefeld, No. 19 Li Na, No. 20 Tatiana Golovin, No. 21 Katarina Srebotnik, No. 22 Vera Zvonareva and No. 26 Maria Kirilenko.

ALL IN: Federer (top), Roddick and Safin (below).



Mavs overcome McGrady's 45 points, down Rockets

DALLAS—DIRK NOWITZKI AND DEVEAN GEORGE each sparked crucial rallies with consecutive 3-pointers, helping the Dallas Mavericks overcome 45 points by Tracy McGrady in a 109-96 victory over the Houston Rockets on Tuesday.

McGrady scored 21 points in the first quarter and had 29 at halftime. He made a 3-pointer that put Houston up 65-52 midway through the third quarter, but it

couldn't last.

George answered with a pair of 3s, sparking a 15-2 run that let Dallas tie it. A few minutes later, Nowitzki powered a 20-4 run that he finished off with back-to-back 3s, celebrating each with gusto.

Nowitzki, who was named the conference player of the week earlier in the day, had 30 points, 10 rebounds and six assists.

In Oklahoma City, Jannero Pargo scored

a season-high 25 points and the New Orleans Hornets held off the Orlando Magic to one basket in overtime for an 84-78 triumph.

A jumper by Butler to start overtime gave the Hornets a 77-75 lead. Orlando then missed two shots and turned it over twice before Devin Brown sank two free throws for a 79-75 lead. After Mason made one of two free throws with 27.4 seconds

left, Butler kept the ball alive and Pargo added two more free throws to make it 82-75 with 23.1 seconds to play.

Orlando's only basket in overtime was a 3-pointer by Keyon Dooling in the final 10 seconds.

In Seattle, Ray Allen scored 22 points and dished out 11 assists to help the SuperSonics beat Cleveland, 101-96.

Allen struggled to follow up his career-

high 54-point performance against Utah last Friday. Allen was constantly harassed by Cleveland's Larry Hughes, and when Allen did find space to get off an open look, his shot was off.

LeBron James led Cleveland with 30 points, including 13 of 15 at the free-throw line. But James scored just five points in the fourth quarter all of them coming on free throws.

AP

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- Got stuck in potholes?
- Fed up with cussing and feuding neighbors?
- Is there an everyday role model in your neighborhood?
- Delightful/dreadful finds on your way to work?

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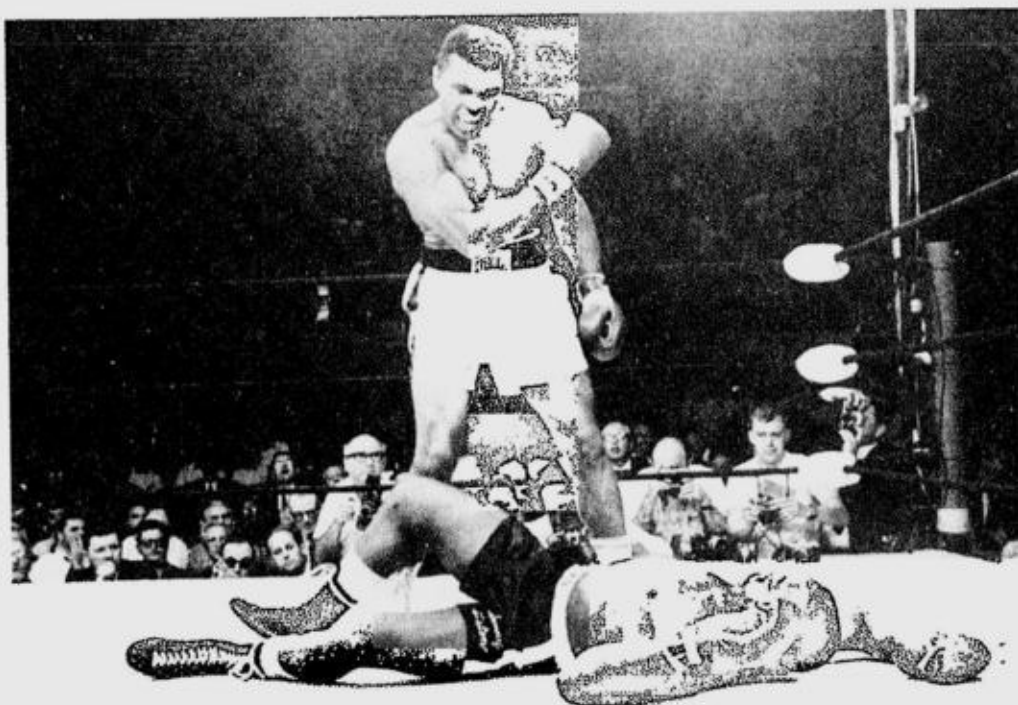
MMS: <insert photo> call name/age/location <caption/message>

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P.S.

Please don't send tips on criminal activities and scams. Call the police.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER



IN ONE of the most unforgettable images of his career, champion Muhammad Ali stands over fallen challenger Sonny Liston, shouting and gesturing, shortly after dropping Liston with a short hard right to the jaw on May 25, 1965, in Lewiston, Maine.

'The Greatest' turns 65

THE IMAGES ARE UNSETTLING AT BEST, upsetting at worst. The world, after all, remembers what he once was.

Muhammad Ali trembles and has to be wheeled to a ringside spot to watch his daughter fight in New York. A frail Ali needs to be supported by NBA player Dwyane Wade at the Orange Bowl in Miami.

The voice that once bellowed that he was "The Greatest" is but a whisper now, and he communicates mostly with facial expressions.

His body is ravaged by Parkinson's disease and the effects of recent spinal surgery. He tires easily. His mind, though, remains sharp and clear, and his passion for people hasn't faded with age.

Ali turns 65 on Wednesday. The heavyweight champion who shocked the world is a senior citizen now.

Like many other retirees, he has moved from Michigan to the desert to be out of the cold.

Visitors to the home in a gated area of Scottsdale, Arizona that he shares with his fourth wife, Lonnie, often find him absorbed in the past, watching films of his fights and documentaries on his life—and Elvis movies.

Even more, he loves to watch himself talk.

"Muhammad is a little sentimental. He likes looking at older things. He likes watching some of the interviews and saving some of the crazy

outrageous things he used to say," Lonnie Ali said. "Sometimes I think he looks at it and says, 'Is that me? Did I really say those things?'"

Those were the days when Ali still floated like a butterfly and stung like a bee, when he added to his legend by defying the odds to beat George Foreman in Zaire and Joe Frazier in the Philippines.

"Rumble young man, rumble," cornerman Bundini Brown would yell to him.

That young man's face is now distorted by Parkinson's, making him look far older than he is. Now, instead of the "Ali Shuffle" that once dazzled the boxing world, he is reduced to sometimes using a walker, the result of surgery to help correct spinal stenosis, the narrowing of the spinal canal which causes compression of the nerve roots.

Some days are better than others. Ali reads fan mail every now and then and painstakingly signs autographs with his trembling hand. Sometimes, mostly in the morning before his medication kicks in, the family can understand every word he says.

"We give him enough meds to make his day go well enough, but not enough to make him look absolutely normal," Lonnie Ali said. "He would look better if we did, but we don't want to. We don't want him on too many medications."

AP

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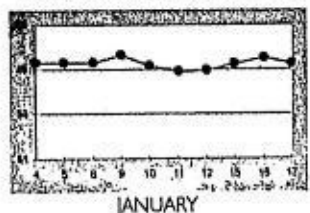
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'06 farm output weaker than expected

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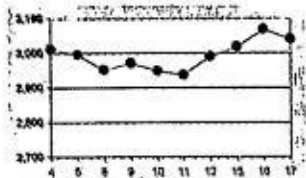


PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P48.85 = \$1

As of 5 p.m., Jan. 17, 2007

STOCK MARKET



(See stock market report on Page B2)

AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION EXPANDED A WEAKER-THAN-EXPECTED 3.88 percent in 2006 as a series of typhoons in the last four months damaged harvests, irrigation systems and transport links, the Department of Agriculture yesterday reported.

Crop production expanded by 4.37 percent, accounting for 47.18 percent of total agricultural output, the Department of Agriculture said in a statement.

Rice, the country's main staple food, enjoyed a 4.96-percent increase in production

while corn, the second staple, grew 15.78 percent.

The fisheries sub-sector posted the biggest increase at 6.31 percent, accounting for 24.92 percent of total agricultural output.

RP FARM/B3

IN THIS ISSUE

BOP

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More

SMEs exploring franchising option /B3

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'06 BOP surplus hits \$3.77B

By Doris C. Dumlaog

THE COUNTRY LAST YEAR POSTED a balance of payments surplus of \$3.77 billion, the highest in seven years.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas said this exceeded the surplus target of \$2.8 billion for 2006. In the previous year, the surplus amounted to \$2.4 billion.

BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. yesterday said last year's surplus reflected the double-digit growth in overseas Filipino workers' remittances, narrowing trade deficit, sustained foreign investment inflows and the higher investment income of the BSP.

Tetangco said it was the highest BOP surplus recorded since the BSP adopted a new external

Trade gap narrower, OFW remittances stronger

payments accounting methodology in 1999, when a surplus of \$3.59 billion was posted.

For December alone, the country posted a BOP surplus of \$631 million, reversing the deficit of \$17 million in November. This was despite the prepayment of more foreign debts of the BSP during the period.

The BOP measures the foreign exchange transactions between the domestic economy and the rest of the world.

The year-end BOP surplus was fueled by a strong current account position, which posted a

surplus of \$4.9 billion last year. Current account records the trade in goods and services as well as cash transfers, such as from migrant workers.

The trade deficit as recorded in the country's BOP was estimated to have narrowed down to \$10.7 billion for 2006.

Export receipts last year were estimated to have expanded by 16 percent versus an earlier forecast of 12 percent due to additional earnings from garments, mineral products—particularly copper metal and concentrates. Import growth in 2006 was es-

timated to have reached 12 percent.

In the meantime, remittances from OFWs sent through banks breached the \$1-billion mark in November, bringing the total cash transfers for the first 11 months of the year to a record-high of \$11.44 billion, up 17.6 percent from year-ago level.

The country's BOP performance last year mirrored the rise in foreign reserves to an all-time high of \$23 billion even as the public sector took advantage of robust dollar inflows to prepay foreign debts during the year.

The GIR consists of the BSP's gross foreign currency holdings, gold reserves, foreign investments and special drawing rights from the International Monetary Fund.

PDIC backs bidding of PBCom stake

STATE-OWNED PHILIPPINE DEPOSIT INSURANCE Corp. favors the sale of the controlling stake in medium-sized Philippine Bank of Communications through a public bidding.

However, the agency said it was keeping its hands off the ongoing shareholder squabble in the bank for now.

In an interview during the annual bankers' cocktail party Tuesday night, PDIC president Michael Osmeña told reporters that key PBCom shareholders—the Luys, Chungs and Nublas—must break the impasse among themselves.

"They will probably resolve it among themselves but they must abide by the agreement they signed with us, that is for them to sell as a block," Osmeña said.

Two PBCom shareholder groups, the Nubla and Chung families, entered into a deal to sell their combined 58.26 percent stake to Philtrust Bank for about P3 billion or P30 per share last Nov. 20. But the Luys, the single biggest voting block with a 37-percent stake, had opposed the transaction and vowed to use their veto power.

In 2004, when the PDIC extended a P7.6-billion financial package to PBCom, the shareholders were obliged to divest absolute control of the bank, or at least 67 percent, within five years. Under corporate laws, a 67-percent voting block is also needed to effect a merger between the two banks.

Once the five-year window (for the sale of a controlling stake in PBCom) is over, Osmeña said PDIC would then have to intervene in PBCom affairs.

Philtrust Bank, for its part, is hoping PDIC would intervene now and give its consent on its proposal to acquire a controlling stake in PBCom in line with the banking regulators' policy to encourage consolidation in the banking industry.

PDIC had earlier pre-qualified groups interested in buying the controlling stake in PBCom. The shortlist includes Union Bank of the Philippines, the group of Jaime Gonzalez (president of Export Bank), Security Bank and the Lucio Tan group. **Doris C. Dumlaog**

Share prices down 0.94%

SHARE PRICES YESTERDAY CLOSED 0.94 percent lower as the market corrected after a three-day rally, dealers said.

Investors expected the downturn, given the market's hefty gains in the past three sessions. They believe the general trend will continue upward because of the improving outlook for the economy this year.

The composite index fell 28.73 points to 3,041.56. The broader all-share index shed 12.75 points to 1,907.49.

Losers beat gainers 58 to 55, with 53 stocks unchanged.

Turnover was 3.2 billion shares worth P3.9 billion (\$80 million).

Philippine Long Distance Telephone fell P30 to P2,405.

Property developers also took a beating, with Megaworld Corp. down four centavos to P2.34 and Ayala Land down 25 centavos to P16.25.

However, a few blue chips extended their gains, with top-traded Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co. gaining 50 centavos to P56.50. SM Investments advanced P5 to P345.

San Miguel A-shares were unchanged at P64, while its B-shares fell P2 to P76. **AFP**

What's up, duck?

BREAKTIME



Conrado R. Banal III

LET US SAY THAT YOU WANT TO FOOL NOBODY but yourself about the genuine troubles of business in the real world.

Then you must escape from reality by listening to the economic team of this cute administration of Gloriaaeta, which never fails to talk of... well, "bright prospects."

In their fantasy, este, no, "agenda" pala, those ducks are giving themselves *pogi* points for the huge gains of the peso in its exchange rate against the dollar.

Okay, sure, one respected banker believes that, from the present P48.70 to a dollar (from P55 plus at its height), the exchange rate can even hit P47 to a dollar this year.

He said such a rate was "doable," implying perhaps that somebody was actually doing something about the exchange rate over there at the Bangko Sentral.

Anyway, our fearless economic managers point at the huge amount of funds coming into the country from abroad as the biggest reason for the peso's gain.

Whaaat—the reason is not better economic fundamentals, such as lower cost of electricity, modern infrastructure, and controlled graft and corruption?

Money, indeed, is coming in from abroad, such as the "hot money" going into stocks, foreign currency loans of the Bangko Sentral, and OFW remittances. But business think tanks always tell us that for this country to catch up with its neighbors, it really needs more of the direct investments from abroad. You know—investments in factories and infrastructure! These, sadly, are not the biggest factors behind the peso's amazing gains against the dollar of late.

Look, we have billions upon billions of dollars in ODAs (official development assistance) for infrastructure that we pay stiff financing fees for but do not use.

Why is that? Well, one good reason is that, in ODA-funded projects, our heroes in this cute administration can hardly expect to get this little thing called "kickback."

Anyway, so what's up in this peso miracle? How beneficial is the peso's gains to the public, really? I mean, what's in it for the guys down here in my barangay?

A strong peso should make imported items cheaper, and that's about it. At the same time, it hurts the exporters and the families of those nine million plus OFWs.

Our biggest import is of course oil. With the gain made by the peso of more than P6 per dollar lately, do we see prices going down at the gas stations?

For that matter, do we see prices of anything going down soon?

I tell you what: Only the big importers (oil companies and department stores, for instance) are making a killing from the peso's strengthening. Nice, no?

IF IT TELLS me anything, the move of finance man Lorenzo Tan (former president of PNB and UCPB) to the Yuchengco bank, RCBC, coming from the Canadian insurance firm Sunlife, may mean that Philamlife can stay as the biggest insurance firm in the country. RCBC already announced Tan as its new president.

Word had it that while he was with Sunlife, Tan was working on the deal of a lifetime, something to do with a merger between the local Sunlife and a big local insurance compa-

ny, making the resulting firm the biggest in the country.

Question: With Tan now out of Sunlife, is the plan still pushing through?

We all know that Philamlife made some strategic moves of its own, putting "expats" from the United States in key positions, after the company posted bad (okay, very bad) financial results.

It is said that Philamlife is head-hunting for a new chair, now that current chair Jose Cuisia, the former Central Bank governor, is about to... well, shall we say, retire.

IT'S A REAL-LIFE soap opera, featuring the word war between the country's top television networks, GMA-7 and ABS-CBN, something to do with "cheating" by ABS-CBN in the ratings.

Adding drama to what is turning out to be an ugly fight, is another letter sent by GMA-7 to ad agencies, refuting the claims of ABS-CBN regarding its surprise upsurge in the number of its viewers in the cable homes.

Now, the reality in advertising is that the industry has changed. It is not as lucrative as it used to be. The budget for media ads, for instance, is being slashed continually because clients are going more and more for "below-the-line" promotions.

In other words, the network war over ratings is precisely a fight for control of the biggest slice of what may be left of the advertising pie in the future.

Earlier, GMA-7 sent letters to various ad agencies, saying it had lost confidence in the AGB-Nielsen survey of television home viewers.

ABS-CBN basically narrowed the big lead of GMA-7 in non-cable ratings, due to a big jump in its cable ratings.

To answer GMA-7's out-and-out accusation, ABS-CBN wrote the ad agencies that its good performance in the AGB-Nielsen survey had something to do with a "technical problem."

ABS-CBN said its low band frequency (Channel 2), which was the lowest band among the free TV stations, caused broadcast "noise," which is less of a problem in cable. This should explain why it had a higher rating in cable than in non-cable.

But then, GMA-7 claimed it had hired technical experts who said that what ABS-CBN was saying was, basically, "baloney."

In cable, for instance, ABS-CBN moved from Channel 6 to Channel 8 in 2003. So how come, if the claim of ABS-CBN about technical problems was true, its cable ratings even went down from 13.3 percent in 2001 to 11.3 percent two years later in 2005?

As for ABS-CBN's claim that its higher cable ratings resulted from "content improvement," GMA-7 wondered why the ABS-CBN ratings claim took place only in cable, while its non-cable ratings continued to decline.

Next in the series, surely, will be the answer of ABS-CBN. I'm just not sure if the guys in the advertising industry have had enough of this soap.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of January 17, 2007)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	7.2	7.2	7.2	7.2	35,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	46.5	47	45.5	46	1,601,200
Bank of the Phil. Islands	69	69	67	68	967,000
China Banking Corp.	695	695	690	690	4,750
Citibank Savings Bank	19.25	19.25	19.25	19.25	400
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.49	0.49	0.48	0.48	3,700,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	82	82	82	82	65,300
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	55.5	56.5	55.5	56.5	7,732,200
Phil. Bank of Comm. A	49	49	49	49	35,200
Philippine National Bank	47	47	46	46.5	5,800
Phil. Savings Bank	49	49	49	49	32,800
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	30	30	29.5	29.5	9,900
Security Bank Corp.	68	68	67.5	68	39,900
Union Bank of the Phil.	54	54	54	54	350,000
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Bankard Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	42,000
Citisechole.Com Inc.	30.5	31	4.95	4.95	7,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	1620	1630	30.5	31	1,400
Manulife Financial Corp.	1.52	1.62	1.52	1.62	1,816,000
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	300	302.5	300	302.5	5,150
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	2035	2050	2035	2050	902,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1.62	1.62	1.6	1.6	52,068,000
Investage Corp.	5.2	5.2	5	5.1	829,800
PNOC Energy Dev. Corp.	56	56.5	55	55.5	1,352,000
First Gen Corp.	78.5	78.5	73.5	73.5	562,400
First Edge Corp.	59.5	62	59.5	61	1,473,800
Manila Electric Co. B	60.5	62.5	60.5	61.5	20,237,000
Manila Water Co. Inc.	9	9.2	9	9.2	115,000
Petron Corp.	4.15	4.35	4.15	4.3	3,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	3,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.14	1.14	1.12	1.12	3,000
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
CADP Group Corp.	2.04	2.04	2.04	2.04	3,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	21	21.25	21	21	331,500
Justine Foods Corp.	45	45	42.5	43	3,003,000
RFM Corp.	1.18	1.26	1.18	1.26	742,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.8	2.85	2.8	2.8	1,750,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.38	0.39	0.38	0.39	184,900
San Miguel Corp. A	64	64	63.5	64	8,083,000
San Miguel Corp. B	78	78	76	76	2,493,800
Alliance Tuna Int'l. Inc.	2.02	2.12	2.02	2.08	13,533,000
Universal Robina Corp.	19	19.25	19	19.25	4,227,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Southeast Asian Cement	1.3	1.3	1.24	1.26	50,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	4.2	4.2	4.05	4.1	1,225,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	6,233,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	8.2	8.2	8	8	125,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	6	6	6	6	10,758,000
Republic Cement Corp.	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.3	1,000
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
CHEMICALS	5.4	5.4	5.1	5.2	19,120,000
Chemtech Technologies Inc.	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	1,000
Euro-Med Lab. Phil. Inc.	0.75	0.77	0.75	0.76	19,120,000
Geograce Res. Phil. Inc.	0.21	0.225	0.21	0.215	150,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	10,000,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Asia Amalgamated Holdings	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	48,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	10,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	10,000,000
Ayala Corp.	605	610	600	605	457,420
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67	180,000
Aboritz Equity Ventures	9.3	9.6	9	9.3	6,443,000
Aio Net Holdings Inc.	0.0675	0.0775	0.0675	0.0775	225,300,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	113,000
APC Group Inc.	0.41	0.41	0.4	0.4	14,220,000
Alcom Gold Res. Corp.	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	39,500,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.06	1.06	1.06	1.06	200,000
Baobab Gold Holdings Corp.	3.3	3.35	3.3	3.3	177,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	1.16	1.16	1.16	1.16	18,000
Sacaton Cons Indus Inc.	10.25	10.25	10	10	18,000
Bengres Holdings Corp.	2.9	3.05	2.9	2.95	25,351,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	6.8	7.1	6.8	7	2,156,000
Flintvest Dev. Corp.	4.65	4.65	4.55	4.6	584,000
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	220,000
Group of Investments Inc.	2.22	2.22	2.16	2.16	438,200
J.B. Summit Holdings Inc.	11.75	11.75	11.5	11.5	313,000
Medco Holdings	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	440,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.32	0.33	0.32	0.32	110,000
Magnum Holdings Inc.	4.9	5.3	4.85	5.1	2,593,000
SM Development Corp.	2.02	2.14	2	2.06	12,500,000
SM Investments Corp.	0.021	0.021	0.021	0.021	20,100,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	600,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.72	0.72	0.71	0.72	510,000
Sinophill Corp.	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.165	4,620,000
SM Investments Corp.	340	352.5	340	345	1,800,000
South China Resources Inc.	1.06	1.06	1.06	1.06	120,000
Seafont Resources Corp.	1.64	1.76	1.64	1.72	1,839,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	1,740,000
Wellux Industries Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.135	0.135	640,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	16.5	16.5	16.25	16.25	18,789,700
Belle Corp.	1.22	1.26	1.22	1.26	8,718,000
A Brown Co. Inc.	1.74	1.74	1.64	1.68	974,000
Cityland Development Corp.	1.64	1.64	1.64	1.64	479,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.49	0.49	0.48	0.48	479,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	3.35	3.35	3.3	3.3	373,000
C&P Homes Inc.	1.66	1.7	1.66	1.66	182,000
Cebu Prop. Vent. A	1.84	1.86	1.84	1.86	135,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	100,000
Eda Realty Developers Inc.	0.225	0.225	0.22	0.22	150,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.65	0.67	0.65	0.66	21,520,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	1.64	1.64	1.64	1.64	130,000
Ever-Gotoseo Resources	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.065	6,300,000
Flintvest Land Inc.	1.7	1.7	1.64	1.64	55,583,000
Gotoseo Land Inc.	0.15	0.15	0.14	0.14	520,000
Gotoseo Land Inc. B	0.15	0.15	0.14	0.14	520,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.55	0.55	0.54	0.54	7,150,000
Phil-Estate Land, Inc.	0.82	0.84	0.82	0.84	4,180,000
Megaworld Corp.	2.34	2.36	2.26	2.34	162,031,000
SM Development Corp.	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.4	790,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.35	0.36	0.35	0.36	1,530,000
Philippines Estates Corp.	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.175	13,253,200
Robinsons Land Corp.	15.75	15.75	15.25	15.5	13,253,200
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.72	0.72	0.69	0.7	15,610,000
SM Development Corp.	3.4	3.4	3.35	3.4	9,263,700
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	11.75	11.75	11.25	11.5	460,000
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.59	0.59	0.58	0.59	3,030,000
Unwired Holdings Inc.	0.105	0.11	0.105	0.105	148,400
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	19.75	21	19.75	20.25	50,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	1	1	1	1	50,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.98	2	1.96	1.98	14,134,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	1220	1220	1200	1220	55,300
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	6.4	6.4	6.4	6.4	11,841,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2400	2415	2385	2405	70,900
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.24	0.25	0.24	0.24	35,200,000
Imperial Res.	0.021	0.021	0.021	0.021	14,600,000
Ionics Inc.	2.6	2.6	2.46	2.46	1,320,000
IPVC Corp.	3.85	3.85	3.85	3.85	1,320,000
Infanto Info and Tech Inc.	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.055	1,000,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.0575	0.06	0.0575	0.06	300,000
Musim Semiconductors Corp.	1.4	1.4	1.36	1.36	232,000
Transpacific Broadband	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	41,000
Philweb Corp.	0.033	0.034	0.033	0.034	200,700,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	4	4	4	4	25,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	24.5	24.5	23.5	23.5	296,200
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.93	0.93	0.93	0.93	31,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	20,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	2.16	2.16	2.14	2.16	310,000
Manila Jockey Club	3	3	3	3	240,000
Philippine Racing Club	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	5,000
EDUCATION					
Far Eastern University	800	800	800	800	5,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
MacroAsia Corp.	2.08	2.1	2.08	2.1	280,000
Paxys Inc.	20	20.75	20	20.75	528,500
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	5.4	5.5	5.4	5.4	145,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	5.4	5.5	5.4	5.5	145,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	277,500,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	9.3	9.4	9.2	9.2	576,000
Benguet Corp. A	2.55	2.55	2.55	2.7	29,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	0.25	0.27	0.25	0.27	53,780,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. A	0.27	0.3	0.27	0.3	14,010,000
A Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.025	0.026	0.024	0.025	1,144,500,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.027	0.028	0.027	0.028	388,100,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.027	0.028	0.027	0.028	41,000,000
Umico Corp.	3.8	3.8	3.75	3.75	9,800,000
Phillex Mining Corp.	16.25	16.25	15.75	15.75	608,700
Semirara Mining Corp.	0.69	0.71	0.69	0.71	700,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	1.44	1.46	1.42	1.44	1,726,000
Vulcan Ind't	0.28	0.28	0.27	0.27	650,000
OIL					
Basic Petroleum Corp.	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	51,700,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.012	28,500,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.06	462,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.06	462,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	24	24	24	24	74,000
PNOC Exploration Corp.-B	11	11.25	10.75	10.75	828,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	11	11.25	10.75	10.75	828,000

THURSDAY, JANUARY 18, 2007

BUSINESS

B3

Fuel prices expected to go down in coming weeks

Reduction seen due to softer global oil rates, stronger peso

By Abigail L. Ho

MOTORISTS MAY BE TREATED to a fuel price reduction of as much as P1 a liter in the coming weeks as international oil prices continue to soften and the peso continues to strengthen.

In an interview yesterday, Independent Philippine Petroleum Companies Association president Glenn Yu said oil firms still had some leeway to bring down prices as the price of oil in the international market had significantly declined over the past weeks.

Also, the peso remained strong against the greenback, helping ease the price pressure on local oil companies, Yu said.

According to data from the Department of Energy, the regional benchmark Dubai crude had slid to an average of \$52.48 a barrel this month from \$58.68 a barrel the month before.

The price of unleaded gasoline based on the Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS) benchmark for refined petroleum products also dropped to an average of \$62.55 a barrel in the first 16 days of Jan-

uary, from last month's \$68.16 a barrel.

MOPS-based diesel slipped to a \$69.08-a-barrel average in the Jan. 1-16 period, after surging to a price of \$72.20 a barrel last month.

Yu, also the president of Seaoil Philippines Inc., noted that a \$1-a-barrel drop in international oil prices should translate to a reduction of 35 centavos a liter at the pump.

Local oil firms cut gasoline, diesel and kerosene prices over the weekend by 50 centavos a liter.

Based on DOE monitoring, that last price cut brought premium unleaded gasoline prices to between P35.53 and P38.06 a liter, diesel to between P30.27 and P34.30 a liter, and kerosene to between P33.69 and P38.50 a liter.

Yu said oil firms could reduce fuel prices by as much as P1.50 a liter at the start of the year, due to the decline in world oil prices and the strengthening of the peso.

Since they had already slashed prices by 50 centavos a liter last week, he said motorists could expect further price cuts, likely within the next two weeks.

Philippines APC consolidates power assets touted to be Asia's best issuer

By Daxim L. Lucas

ELECTRICITY GENERATION FIRM Aboitiz Power Corp. (APC) will acquire the rights and interests of its parent company in eight power producers ahead of its planned initial public offering.

In a statement to the stock exchange, APC said it would give its common stocks to Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc. (AEV)—a Cebu-based conglomerate owned by the Aboitiz family—in exchange for the latter's shares in a diverse group of power companies located around the country.

These companies are Davao Light & Power Co. Inc., Visayan Electric Co. Inc., Hijos de F. Escano Inc., Cotabato Light & Power Co., Subic Enerzone Corp., San Fernando Electric Light and Power Co. Inc., Pampana Energy Ventures Inc. and Aboitiz Energy Solutions Inc.

"The board of directors of AEV approved the assignment of all of its rights and interests in the shares of stock of the foregoing corporations in exchange for the issuance in its favor of common shares in APC," the firm said in a statement. "The shares of stock will be transferred by AEV to APC at their historical acquisition costs in exchange for shares of APC valued at par."

APC also increased its authorized capital stock to P17 billion from P5 billion ahead of the IPO, its parent firm said.

The firm said it would call a special shareholders' meeting next month at its Cebu headquarters "to explain the planned initial public offering of APC as well as to seek shareholders' ratification of the transfer of AEV's investments in power companies to APC."

AEV has appointed investment banking firm UBS as its financial ad-

viser for the IPO. The public offer, however, would still have to secure the approval of the local bourse, securities regulators and tax authorities.

The company said the IPO was "consistent with the spirit of Electric Power Industry Reform Act for broader public ownership of electricity distribution and generation assets."

"The offering will also enhance APC's position as a participant in the privatization of Napocor assets as well as in the development and acquisition of additional power projects," it added in an earlier statement.

APC has yet to disclose details of the offering, like its timetable, offer size and expected proceeds. In the first nine months of 2006, AEV's power generation and distribution units posted a combined net profit of P1.8 billion, representing an 8.2-percent annual increase.

DOF to form team to audit BOC, BIR

By Michelle V. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE said it would create an audit team to check the accuracy of revenue-collection reports made by the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Bureau of Customs.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said the move would help address doubts on the validity of reports made by these two agencies, the government's biggest revenue earners.

Teves issued the statement amid allegations that the BOC, which earlier said it met its P197-billion revenue collection goal for 2006, was window dressing its monthly collection reports.

In contrast, the BIR, according to unofficial reports, missed its P675.4-billion target last year by P28.5 billion.

Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales denied the allegation, saying the Bureau of the Treasury reviews its reports before these are announced to the public.

Despite this, Teves said it was prudent for the DOF to create an audit team.

Teves explained that having an audit team was part of good governance,

saying the DOF was taking its cue from private firms that hire auditors to ensure accuracy of their financial reports.

Reporting accurate revenue-collection figures is crucial, especially with the implementation of the Lateral Attrition law.

The law grants incentives to revenue collectors that will surpass their targets, while penalizing those that record shortfalls.

Penalties may include reassignment, demotion or dismissal from service.

Revenue collection shortfall of at least 7 percent, if unjustified, will lead to dismissal.

The DOF is currently going through the collection reports of each revenue district office of the BIR and port office of the BOC to determine whether any revenue collector would be penalized or rewarded.

The Lateral Attrition law is one of the fiscal reform agenda of the Arroyo administration.

The law was pushed in Congress by the administration's economic officials to encourage revenue collectors to meet their collection targets and help the government narrow its budget gap.

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RP farm output weaker than expected

From page B1

The government had said in November that it expected the agricultural sector, which accounts for around a fifth of the country's economic output, to grow by 4 to 4.5 percent in 2006, down from an earlier goal of at least 5 percent growth due to the storms.

Analysts said the poor farming performance could threaten the government's 2006 gross domestic product growth target of 5.5 percent, already at the lower end of an original range of 5.5 to 6.1 percent.

The government set a target of 4-5 percent growth in 2007 for farm output.

Annual farm output growth in the fourth quarter slowed to 1.64 percent, from 4.27 percent in the previous three months, as typhoons that killed more than 1,000 people uprooted fruit trees, ravaged rice irrigation systems and tore up bridges and roads.

The storms caused P2.6 billion (\$53 million) in damages to the agriculture sector.

Despite the devastation, all farming sub-sectors, excluding poultry, registered output gains after a particularly poor 2005 performance.

Farm output rose just 2.31 percent in 2005—revised up from 2.24 percent—due to drought. In 2004, farm yield grew 5.2 percent.

Government officials hope that brisk consumer spending, fueled by record overseas remittances and double-digit export growth, will compensate for weak agricultural output and sluggish manufacturing output last year.

Last week, the government raised its target for full-year economic growth for this year to 6.1-6.7 percent from 5.7-6.5 percent due to an expected rise in government capital spending, continued export growth and sustained remittance inflows from more than 8 million Filipinos working abroad.

Yap said the unmilled rice harvest, the country's staple crop, rose nearly 5 percent to 15.33 million metric tons in 2006, due to an expansion in areas planted and investments in high quality seeds.

Despite the improvement in harvests, the Philippines remains one of Asia's largest rice importers as yields fail to keep pace with a rapidly growing population. Christine A. Gaylican, with reports from Reuters, AFP



Republic of the Philippines

COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS

Manila

IN THE MATTER OF
AMENDING RULE 3
SECTIONS 4, 6 AND 8;
RULE 18 SECTIONS 1
AND 5; AND RULE 38
SECTION 8 WITH
ADDITIONAL SECTIONS
OF THE 1993 COMELEC
RULES OF PROCEDURE
AND INSERTING A NEW
RULE ON PRECEDENCE
AND PROTOCOL

Chairman Benjamin S. Abalos, Sr.
Commissioner Resurreccion Z. Borra
Commissioner Florentino A. Tuason, Jr.
Commissioner Romeo A. Brawner
Commissioner Rene V. Sarmiento
Commissioner Nicodemo T. Ferrer

RESOLUTION NO. 7808

WHEREAS, Article IX-C of the 1987 Constitution provides:

Section 3. The Commission on Elections may sit en banc or in two divisions, and shall promulgate its rules of procedure in order to expedite disposition of election cases, including pre-proclamation controversies. All such election cases shall be heard and decided in division provided that motions for reconsideration of decisions shall be decided by the Commission en banc (emphasis supplied).

WHEREAS, the present COMELEC RULES OF PROCEDURE is designed to address the need to dispose the large volume of cases filed before the Commission;

WHEREAS, in order to fulfill the Commission's constitutional mandate of deciding election cases filed before it, there is an imperative need to amend the present COMELEC Rules of Procedure, specifically Rule 3 Sections 4 and 6 and 8; Rule 18 Sections 1 and 5; and Rule 38 Section 8;

WHEREAS, in order for the Commission to discharge its functions with utmost integrity, competence and efficiency, there is likewise a need to incorporate a Rule on Precedence and Protocol to the present COMELEC Rules of Procedure;

NOW THEREFORE, the Commission RESOLVED as it is hereby RESOLVES to amend Rule 3 Sections 4 and 6 and 8; Rule 18 Sections 1 and 5; and Rule 38 Section 8 and to include a Rule on Precedence and Protocol on the present COMELEC RULES OF PROCEDURE to read as follows:

RULE ON PRECEDENCE AND PROTOCOL

Sec. 1. Concept. - The Chairman enjoys precedence over all the other members of the Commission in all official functions. The other Commissioners shall have precedence according to the order of their appointments as officially transmitted from Malacañang.

Sec. 2. When Rule on Precedence is Applicable. - The rule on precedence shall be applied in the following instances:

- In case of permanent vacancy in the office of the Chairman or permanent inability to perform the powers, functions and duties of his office, the Commissioner who is first in precedence shall perform his powers, functions and duties until another Chairman is appointed and has qualified or such disability is removed. In case of his absence, the Chairman may designate the most Senior Commissioner to act in his stead and behalf; however, in the event of the Chairman's temporary absence, disqualification or inability to preside over a particular case, the Commissioner who is first in precedence shall take over.
- In the determination of the Presiding Commissioners of each Division;
- In the sitting arrangement of the Commissioners in all official functions;
- In the choice of supporting personnel and other employees; and
- In the choice of office space, facilities, equipment, transportation and cottages

Sec. 3. When Rule on Precedence is Not Applicable - Precedence in rank shall not be observed in social and other non-official functions nor be used to justify discrimination in the assignment of cases, amount of compensation, allowances or other forms of remuneration, except in the case of the Chairman or whoever is acting in his place and the Presiding Commissioners of the Divisions.

Sec. 4. Ceremonial Protocol in En Banc Session and Division Hearing.

- The Chairman, during an en banc session or the Presiding Commissioner in a division hearing enters and exits first, followed by the other Commissioners according to seniority.
- As the Commissioners enter the session hall for an en banc session or hearing, the Clerk of the Commission announces: "The Honorable Commission on Elections En Banc, presided by Mr./Madame Chairman _____ is now in session. Silence is enjoined." With that announcement and after the Commissioners reach their respective chairs, the Chairman bangs the gavel. All shall then take their seats.

In Division hearings, the Division Clerk of the Commission announces: "The _____ Division of the Honorable Commission on Elections, presided by its Presiding Commissioner, Mr./Madame Commissioner _____ is now in session. Silence is enjoined." With that announcement and after the Commissioners reach their respective chairs, the Presiding Commissioner bangs the gavel. All shall then take their seats.

Sec. 5. Conduct of Hearings. - The Chairman or the Presiding Commissioner oras the case may be controls the proceedings during the hearing. He shall rule on all motions and objections interposed therein in consultation with the members. He may, however, yield the conduct of the proceedings to any member who shall exercise the powers of the Presiding Commissioner.

RULE 3 - HOW THE COMMISSION TRANSACTS BUSINESS

Sec. 3. The Commission Sitting in Divisions. - The Commission shall sit in two (2) Divisions to hear and decide protests or petitions in ordinary actions, special actions, special cases, provisional remedies, contempt and special proceedings except in accreditation of citizens' arms of the Commission.

Sec. 4. Composition of a Division. - Each Division shall be composed of three Commissioners, the most ranking of whom shall be designated as the Presiding Commissioner of the First Division, the second ranking as the Presiding Commissioner of the Second Division, and the Senior and Junior members of each Division shall be determined in accordance with the Rule on Precedence and Protocol.

Sec. 5. Quorum; Votes Required. - (a) When sitting en banc, four (4) Members of the Commission shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of transacting business. The Concurrence of a majority of the Members of the Commission shall be necessary for the pronouncement of a decision or resolution. (emphasis supplied)

- When sitting in Division, two (2) Members of a Division shall constitute a quorum to transact business. The concurrence of at least two (2) Members of a Division shall be necessary to reach a decision, resolution, order or ruling. If this required number is not obtained, the cases shall be automatically elevated to the Commission en banc for decision or resolution.
- Any motion to reconsider a decision, resolution, or order of ruling of a Division shall be resolved by the Commission en banc except motions on interlocutory orders of the division which shall be resolved by the division which issued the order.

Sec. 6. Substitution of members of a Division. -

- Temporary vacancy.** - Whenever a member of a Division is on leave, seriously ill, temporarily disabled, is absent, inhibits himself, or is disqualified from sitting in a case, the junior member of the other Division shall substitute such Commissioner, participating therein in an acting capacity, in addition to his regular membership in his own Division.
- Permanent vacancy.** - A permanent vacancy in the ranks of the commissioners in a particular Division shall be filled by the most senior Commissioner in the other Division in an acting capacity, but only as a signing member, of the Division where the vacancy exists, in addition to his duties as regular member of his current Division.

Under either of the foregoing substitutions, the Division where the acting or signing member is assigned shall be designated as "Special First Division" or "Special Second Division," as the case may be, for purposes of the pertinent cases therein pending.

Sec. 8. Assignment and Raffle of Cases. - Assignment of cases for completion of records and for study and report among the members of the Commission en banc, shall be done strictly through raffle to be conducted regularly by the Commission en banc, to be presided by the Chairman of the Commission. Provided, that there shall be an equitable assignment of cases among the Commissioners, taking into consideration the nature of the cases classified as follows:

CATEGORY A: Special Actions (SPA), Special Cases (SPC), Special Proceedings (SPP) and Election Offenses (EO), and Election Matters (EM)

CATEGORY B: Ordinary Actions i.e., Election Protest Cases (EPC), Election Appeal Cases (EAC) and Special Reliefs (SPR).

- Color Coding of Case Records.** - To facilitate the identification of

cases, the cover of case records shall bear/use the following colors:

1. **Violet** for Election Appeal Cases (EAC)
 2. **Blue** for Election Protest Case (EPC)
 3. **Green** for Special Relief Case (SPR)
 4. **Yellow** for Special Proceeding Case (SPP)
 5. **Orange** for Special Action Case (SPA)
 6. **Red** for Election Offense (EO)
 7. **Brown** for Special Cases (SPC)
 8. **Gray** for Election Matters (EM) and other Contentious Cases
- c) To ensure an equitable distribution in the number and nature of cases to be assigned to the Commissioners, the Clerk of the Commission concerned shall prepare separate lists of cases for each category at least one day before the scheduled raffle.

The Clerk of the Commission of the Office of the Clerk of the Commission shall act on Special Actions (SPA), Special Cases (SPC), Special Proceedings (SPP), Election Offenses (EO), and Election Matters (EM).

For Ordinary Actions i.e., Election Protest Cases (EPC); Election Appeal Cases (EAC) and (3) Special Reliefs (SPR), the Director of the Electoral Contest Adjudication Department (ECAD) shall serve as the Clerk of the Commission.

No special raffle shall be conducted except for urgent necessity as determined and authorized in writing by the Chairman or in his absence or unavailability, the most Senior Commissioner present.

The case load of the Chairman shall be in the ratio of 1:4 or 25% of the total number of en banc cases raffled to a Commissioner.

- Raffle of cases among members of a division shall be conducted and presided by its Presiding Commissioners, in the presence of the members of the Division.
- A Commissioner shall be excluded from assignment of cases three (3) months prior to his retirement or cessation from office.
- Within three months from retirement or cessation from office of a Commissioner, the pending cases assigned to him shall be raffled among the remaining members of the Commission or Division who participated therein unless otherwise directed by the Chairman of the Commission.

When a Commissioner retires or otherwise ceases to become a member of the Commission, he shall, within thirty (30) days thereafter, submit to the Chairman and to the Presiding Commissioner of his division a complete inventory of cases assigned to him, copy furnished the Clerk of the Commission, and the Judicial Records Division. Within the same period, the records of said cases should be forwarded to the Judicial Records Division.

Sec. 9. Distribution of cases upon appointment of a new Commissioner. - Upon appointment and assumption of a new Commissioner, he shall be assigned an initial case load equal to the average caseload of an incumbent Commissioner as shown in the latest report of the Clerk of the Commission. The initial case load shall first be taken from the cases submitted for resolution left behind by a Commissioner who retired from service or otherwise ceased to be a member of the Commission, and from those unloaded by the incumbent Commissioners of such number and nature as determined by the Commission en banc.

RULE 18 DECISIONS

Section 1. Procedure in Making Decisions. - The Commissioner to whom the case is assigned for study and report shall submit a written report thereon to the other members of the Division or the Commission en banc for consultation. The Chairman or the Presiding Commissioner of the Commission shall include the case in the agenda for a meeting of the Division or the Commission en banc for deliberation.

The ponente shall prepare the decision within 15 days from the last date of deliberation, and shall forthwith furnish all the other Commissioners copies of the draft for their review. Any separate opinion, concurring or dissenting opinion shall be submitted within seven (7) days from receipt of a copy of the draft resolution. In case a dissenting opinion is subsequently adopted by the majority, the dissenters shall decide who shall write the new majority opinion, while the original ponencia becomes the dissenting opinion.

Provided that, the period in the foregoing procedure shall not be observed in cases where the law requires a shorter period for the disposition of cases.

Section 2. Signing of the Resolution. - After the members of the Commission have reviewed the final draft of a resolution, it shall be scheduled for signing. The ponencia shall be signed by the members of the Division or the Commission en banc, as the case may be, in the presence of each other.

After the decision is signed, it shall be promulgated immediately.

A Certification to the effect that the conclusions in the resolution were reached in consultation before the case was assigned to the ponente of the decision shall be incorporated in the decision. Any member who took no part, or dissented or abstained from a decision or resolution must state the reason therefor.

Every resolution shall express therein clearly and distinctly the facts and the law on which it is based.

Section 5. Promulgation. - Promulgation shall be made by filing or delivering a complete copy of the decision, resolution, order or ruling to the Clerk of the Commission concerned.

Section 9. When a case is deemed submitted for Resolution. - (a) A case or matter is deemed submitted for decision or resolution upon completion of records.

Records are deemed completed upon filing of the required briefs or memoranda or the expiration of the period for the filing thereof and the receipt of the Commission of all records from the trial court in case of appeal.

A protest case however requiring examination of ballots and other election documents or paraphernalia shall not be deemed submitted for resolution despite the filing of the required memoranda or briefs in case the subject ballots, election documents or paraphernalia are also involved in an election contest before, and in the custody of, the Presidential Electoral Tribunal or House of Representatives Electoral Tribunal except when examination or revision thereof can be synchronized with the examination or revision in the said tribunals.

- If the hearing and reception of evidence are delegated to any of its officials, the case or matter shall be deemed submitted for decision as of the date of the receipt of the findings, report or recommendation of the official so delegated and the records of the case.

Thereafter, the Clerk of the Commission or the Division Clerk shall report the case to the Chairman for En Banc cases or to the Presiding Commissioner of a Division for the issuance of a resolution declaring the case submitted for resolution. However, if a protest case cannot be resolved in view of the custody of the ballots, election documents or paraphernalia by the tribunals mentioned above, such a fact shall also be reported for the issuance of a notice of such custody to the parties concerned.

RULE 38 CLERK OF THE COMMISSION AND DEPUTY CLERK OF THE COMMISSION

Sec. 8. Duties of Stenographers. - It shall be the duties of the stenographers to:

- Record faithfully in stenographic notes the proceedings during the session or hearing of the Commission en banc or of the Division;
- At the close of every hearing or session, to deliver immediately the stenographic notes he has taken to the Clerk of the Commission or Division Clerk of the Commission who shall initial all the pages thereof and who shall stamp the date of receipt thereon, and when such notes are transcribed, the transcript shall likewise be delivered to the Clerk of the Commission who shall initial each page thereof. It shall be the duty of the Clerk of the Commission to demand that the stenographer comply with said task and to cause the inclusion of the transcript of stenographic notes in the records of the case submitted for resolution.
- Furnish any requesting party of the transcript of stenographic notes subject to the payment of the prescribed fees; and
- Perform such other duties as the Commission may prescribe.

All resolutions/orders/rules inconsistent herewith are deemed superseded.

RESOLVED, moreover, to re-adjust the following sections of the Comelec Rules of Procedure:

1. Section 9 Rule 3 to become Section 10 in view of an additional section; and
2. Sections 2 to 13 of Rule 18 to become Sections 3 to 14 in view of an additional section.

The Education and Information Department shall cause the publication of this Resolution in two (2) newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines.

SO ORDERED.

BENJAMIN S. ABALOS, SR.
Chairman

RESURRECCION Z. BORRA
Commissioner

FLORENTINO A. TUASON, JR.
Commissioner

ROMEO A. BRAWNER
Commissioner

RENE V. SARMIENTO
Commissioner

NICODEMO T. FERRER
Commissioner

(PDI-Jan. 18, 2007)

B4

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

THURSDAY,
JANUARY 18, 2007

Republic of the Philippines NATIONAL IRRIGATION ADMINISTRATION

Minante I, Cauayan City, Isabela
Second Agrarian Reform Communities Development Project (ARCDPII)
Rehabilitation and Expansion of Simanu Communal Irrigation System
Loan 7152-PH.

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

January 18, 2007

The Government of the Philippines (GOP) has received a loan from The World Bank toward the cost of the Second Agrarian Reform Communities Development Project (ARCDPII) and it intends to apply part of the proceeds of this loan, together with the RA counterpart funds, to payments under the contract for Rehabilitation and Expansion of Simanu Communal Irrigation System under Contract Nos. RIIRR 04 071 03 SIM-I (Package I); RIIRR 04 071 03 SIM-I (Package II) and RIIRR 04 071 03 SIM-I (Package III).

The National Irrigation Administration-Region 02, Cauayan City, Isabela now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for the Rehabilitation and Expansion of Simanu Communal Irrigation System under the three (3) Contract Packages and is expected to be completed and delivered within 150 Calendar Days for Package I; 150 Calendar Days for Package II and 120 Calendar Days for Package III from the date of the official start of the corresponding contract package.

DESCRIPTION OF WORKS:

Package I: Dam Repair with Closed Conduit

Item No.	Scope of Work	Unit	Quantity
I	DAM Repair with Close Conduit		
300	Care of stream	l.s	2.00
600	Common structure excavation (mech)	cu.m	246.00
600	Rock structure excavation (mech.)	cu.m	1,488.75
1200	Structure backfill	cu.m	185.40
1700	Class "A" concrete with dewatering	cu.m	52.67
1700	Class "A" concrete without dewatering	cu.m	373.69
1900	Rubble Masonry	cu.m	672.30
2500	Boulder Riprap	cu.m	650.86
1700	Plain concrete	cu.m	267.44
1600	Demolition of Old Concrete	cu.m	22.50
2800	Gravel blanket	cu.m	148.80

Package II: Canalization, Service Road, Structures and O&M Facilities

Item No.	Scope of Work	Unit	Quantity
I	CANALIZATION		
400	Common Re-excavation	cu.m	4,337.00
1100	Borrow Haul with Compaction	cu.m	10,298.72
400	Common Excavation (Trimming)	cu.m	2,411.00
1700	Plain Concrete	cu.m	1,317.13
2800	Gravel Blanket	cu.m	567.57
	PVC 1/2" diameter	pcs.	2,045.00
	1/2" End Plug	pcs.	6,134.00
II	SERVICE ROAD (Sta. 5+455-Sta. 5+940 MC)		
200	Cleaning & Grubbing	cu.m	2,626.80
1400	Road Surfacing	cu.m	292.80
III	STRUCTURES @ Service Road		
600	Common Structures Excavation	cu.m	35.00
1700	Class "A" Concrete	cu.m	20.00
2400	30" diameter RCP	pcs.	40.00
IV	CONST'N. OF O&M FACILITIES	l.s.	1.00

Package III: Canal Structures/Repair of Pipeline & Revetment

Item No.	Scope of Work	Unit	Quantity
	REPAIR OF PIPELINE (Sta. 0+200-Sta 0+380 MC)		
600	Structure Excavation	cu.m	72.00
1700	Class "A" Concrete	cu.m	9.80
2400	30" diameter RCP	pcs.	120.00
II	REVTMENT (Sta. 0+640-Sta. 0+991)		
600	Structure Excavation	cu.m	269.00
1100	Borrow Haul with Compaction (ECC)	cu.m	5,244.00
600	Rock Structure Excavation	cu.m	420.00
1700	Class "A" concrete with dewatering	cu.m	84.00
1700	Class "A" concrete without dewatering	cu.m	425.97

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act No. 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act. Subject to exceptions stated in this Bidding Documents, only Bids from Bidders who pass an eligibility check will be opened. The Bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine its responsiveness to the technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during post-qualification. The Estimated Project Cost for Contract Package I, Contract Package II and Contract Package III is PHP 7,070,117.00; PHP 7,192,065.00 and PHP 5,338,881.00 respectively.

The documents required in the Eligibility Documents shall be submitted as part of the Technical Documents of the Bidders as provided in the Instruction to Bidders.

Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from the BAC-NIA Region 02 of Minante I, Cauayan City and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. on January 19, 2007 to February 19, 2007.

A complete set of Bidding Documents in English may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of PHP 7,500.00 per contract package. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the bidder or his authorized representative on or before 10:00 A.M. February 19, 2007.

The NIA-BAC Region 02 will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all Eligible Bidders on February 06, 2007 at 10:00 A.M. at the Conference Hall, NIA Regional Office, Minante I, Cauayan City, Province of Isabela.

Eligible Bidders must submit their Bids at the address below on or before 10:00 A.M.

February 19, 2007. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in the form of CASH, MANAGER'S CHECK, CASHIER'S CHECK AND BANK GUARANTEE and in an amount of PHP 106,100.00 for Contract Package I; PHP 107,900.00 for Contract Package II and PHP 80,100.00 for Contract Package III or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late Bids shall not be accepted. Bid opening shall be on 10:00 A.M. February 19, 2007 at the NIA-Region 02, Conference Hall, Minante I, Cauayan City.

MINIMUM EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS

For Contract Package I:

Dump Truck (3 units) - owned; Backhoe Excavator (2 units, 1 unit with pencil hammer) - owned; Bulldozer (1 unit) - owned; Wheel Loader (1 unit) - owned; 1 Bagger Concrete Mixer (3 units) - owned; Concrete Vibrator (3 units) - owned; survey instruments and materials testing apparatus - leased/owned. (Other documents include valid PCAB license, valid and current Mayor permit, BIR tax clearance and Dole Certification).

For Contract Package II:

Dump Truck (3 units) - owned; Backhoe Excavator (2 units) - owned; Bulldozer (1 unit) - owned; Road Grader (1 unit) - owned/leased; Wheel Loader (2 units) - owned; 10 ton Road Roller (1 unit) - owned/leased; Water Truck, 5,000 ltrs. Cap. (1 unit)-owned; Vibratory Compactor (1 unit) - owned; 1 Bagger Concrete Mixer (3 units) - owned; Concrete Vibrator (3 units) - owned; survey instruments and materials testing apparatus - leased/owned. (Other documents include valid PCAB license, valid and current Mayor permit, BIR tax clearance and Dole Certification).

For Contract Package III:

Dump Truck (3 units) - owned; Backhoe Excavator (2 units) - owned; Wheel Loader (1 unit) - owned; 10 tons Road Roller (1 unit) - owned/leased; Bulldozer (1 unit)-owned; Water Truck, 5,000 ltrs. Cap. (1 unit)-owned; Vibratory Compactor (1 unit) - owned; 1 Bagger Concrete Mixer (3 units) - owned; Concrete Vibrator (3 units) - owned; survey instruments and materials testing apparatus - leased/owned. (Other documents include valid PCAB license, valid and current Mayor permit, BIR tax clearance and Dole Certification).

Completion of the Works is 150 Calendar Days for Contract Package I; 150 Calendar Days for Contract Package II and 120 Calendar Days for Contract Package III from the official start of the corresponding Contract Package.

The BAC-NIA Region 02 reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

The Chairman
NIA-BAC Region 02
Minante I, Cauayan City
Province of Isabela
Telephone # 078-652-0285

(Sgd.) FLORENCIO B. SOLIVEN
BAC-CHAIRMAN

(PDI - January 18, 2007)



PNOG-ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Energy Complex, Merritt Road
Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City
Tel. No. 893-1320, Local 5279

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND BID

The PNOG-Energy Development Corporation is inviting all interested suppliers to apply and submit sealed bids for the supply and delivery of the following:

200 Joints of 5" dia. of drillpipes FDM 63314 PHP 22,950,000.00
2 pcs. of 480V of Uninterruptible Power Supply FGA 61619 PHP 4,400,000.00

Eligibility forms and bidding documents shall be available for issuance at the above address c/o Eloisa J. Hufana starting January 18, 2007, and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of PHP 400.00 per document.

For purposes of clarifying certain matters, a pre-bidding conference shall be held on:
January 25, 2007 FGA 61619
February 1, 2007 FDM 63314

2:00 p.m. at the above address.

Applications for eligibility and sealed bids shall be submitted to, and registered with the PNOG-EDC Supply, Property and Materials Management Division at the above address, and thereafter, dropped in the padlocked bid box thereat not later than 2:00 p.m. (Supply Management's Office Wall Clock Time) of February 8, 2007 for FGA 61619 and February 15, 2007 for FDM 63314. Public opening of bids shall follow immediately thereafter. Late bids shall not be accepted.

Prospective bidders shall signify conformance to the bidding terms and conditions, as required, and shall ensure the same through proper submission/execution. Source of funding is from Internal Cash Generation of PNOG-EDC. All bids should be within the Approved Budget for the Contract in order to qualify.

PNOG-Energy Development Corporation reserves the right to annul the bidding process, to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality in the bids received and to accept such bid which is most advantageous to PNOG-EDC without thereby incurring liability to the affected bidder or bidders or any obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the ground(s) for PNOG-EDC's action.

(PDI-Jan. 18, 2007)

Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee I

Republic of the Philippines
CENTRAL LUZON STATE UNIVERSITY
Science City of Muñoz, Nueva Ecija

**NOTICE OF SEARCH FOR THE SELECTION OF THE
PRESIDENT OF THE CENTRAL LUZON STATE UNIVERSITY**

The Board of Regents of the Central Luzon State University (CLSU), Science City of Muñoz, Nueva Ecija formally and publicly announces that the Search for Presidency of the CENTRAL LUZON STATE UNIVERSITY (CLSU) is **NOW OPEN**. Interested applicants and/or nominees are invited to send their formal applications to the Search Committee chaired by Dr. Emil Q. Javier.

The minimum qualifications are:

1. Must be a holder of an earned doctoral degree;
2. Must have at least five (5) years managerial and administrative experience preferably in higher education institutions;
3. Must be a Filipino citizen;
4. Must possess leadership and managerial skills within the purview of the needs, thrusts, goals and objectives of the university;
5. Must be of good moral character;
6. Preferably must not be over 61 years of age during time of application.

Application should be accompanied:

1. Formal application letter;
2. Comprehensive curriculum vitae with picture highlighting the academic, research, extension and production exposure and certified supporting documents;
3. Proposed Vision, Mission and Thrusts for the University;
4. NSO authenticated birth and marriage certification;
5. NBI Clearance;
6. Ombudsman clearance for those already or have been in the government services;
7. Certificates of no pending administrative case from the Civil Service Commission Regional Office and present employers;
8. Result of Neuro-Psychiatric Examination conducted by government physician or any accredited institutions;
9. Medical Certificate from government physician; and
10. Letter authorizing the Search Committee to validate submitted documents

Interested applicants and/or those nominated for the position are requested to submit six (6) sets of their formal application and certified supporting documents in a sealed envelope. Original documents must also be submitted in a separate envelope for authentication of duplicate. All documents must be submitted on or before February 20, 2007 to:

The Search Committee for the CLSU Presidency
c/o Prof. Edgardo C. Ibañez
University and Board Secretary
Central Luzon State University
Science City of Muñoz, Nueva Ecija 3120



CAPIZ ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

Established 1971
Timpas, Panitan, Capiz, Phils.
Tel. nos. (036) 634-0282 to 84; 634-0487; 634-0330; Fax/phone: 634-0264

RE-INVITATION TO BID

The Capiz Electric Cooperative, Inc. (CAPELCO) Main Office at Timpas, Panitan, Capiz invites interested parties to apply for eligibility and to bid for the Barangay Electrification Project in Mun. of Tapaz and Jamindan, Capiz as follows:

1. Delivery and installation of Forty two (42) channels PV battery charging stations.
2. Delivery and installation of Thirty two (32) Solar Home Systems.
3. Delivery and installation of Four Hundred Twenty Four (424) balance of system.

Bid documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of non-refundable fee of Ten Thousand Pesos (Php 10,000.00) to the Capiz Electric Cooperative, Inc. (CAPELCO) main office cashier.

Activities	Schedule
Issuance of bid documents	Jan. 17 to 25, 2007
Deadline of bid submission	Jan. 31, 2007 @ 9:00 a.m.
Pre-bidding conference	Jan. 25, 2007 @ 10:00 a.m.
Opening of bids	Jan. 31, 2007 @ 10:00 a.m.

All interested bidders shall secure from the Department of Energy (DOE) accreditation or certification of good standing aside from the eligibility requirements prescribed by the Capiz Electric Cooperative, Inc. (CAPELCO) tel. nos. (036) 6340-282; 6340-264; 525-2003 c/o Engr. Jovencio A. Villagrancia.

CAPELCO reserves the right to reject any or all bids without disclosing any reason, to waive any minor defects or infirmities therein and to accept such bid as may be considered most advantageous to the Electric Cooperative.

(Sgd.) ENGR. JOVENCIO A. VILLAGRANCIA

Chairman

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

(PDI-Jan. 18 & 20, 2007)



Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino
cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

**NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S
FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)**

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
XPEACE INTL. SKIN CARE CENTER CO. Ru Wang JKK Pacific Bldg., 1689 J. Bocobo St., Malate, Manila		Tattoo Artist
TREND MICRO INCORPORATED- PHILIPPINE BRANCH 15/F, IBM Plaza Bldg., #8 Eastwood Ave., Eastwood City Cyberpark, E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave., Bagumbayan, Quezon City	Chiu-Huang Lee	Global Security Operations Center Manager
NON-TIMBER FOREST PRODUCTS-EXCHANGE PROGRAMME INCORPORATED 92-A Masikap Extn., Brgy. Central, Diliman, Quezon City	Johannes Henricus de Beer	Executive Director
TECHNOSERVE CONSTRUCTION CO., INC. 19/F, Export Bank Plaza, Chino Rocas cor. Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City	Tanveer Rabani	Programmer
DHL EXPRESS (PHILIPPINES) CORP. 2306 Don Chino Rocas Ext., Magallanes Village, Makati City	Charles Brodie Joseph Wyley	VP-Operations
G4S HOLDINGS, INC. Unit 206 Conservatory Building, 605 Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong City	Michael John Ross	Managing Director
DOO WON SJ CONSULTANCY CORPORATION #3 Aurora Arcade, Isidora Hills, Holy Spirit, Quezon City	Hye Kyoung Cho	Accountant

If you have any information/objection to the abovementioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

(Sgd.) LOURDES M. TRASMONTA
Regional Director

(PDI-Jan. 18, 2007)



NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Legazpi City

INVITATION TO SUBMIT OFFERS

The National Food Authority Region V invites all interested parties (poultry & hog raisers; Feed users; & industrial users) to participate and submit offers to the Regional Bids and Awards Committee (RBAC) NFA Regional Office, Pier site Legazpi City for the sale through Public Bidding of the following damaged rice stocks at the minimum bid price indicated below on "as-is-where-is basis":

A. TOTALLY DAMAGED				
Province/ Warehouse	Variety/ Condition	Volume- Bag	Volume- Kg.	Minimum Bid Price/KG
Albay/Tabaco GID	VWEW 62	1,000	50,000	Php 1.20
Albay/Tabaco GID	VXCW 62	85	4,241	Php 1.20
Albay/NFA owned	VWEW 62	2,800	140,134.6	Php 1.20
Albay/Bicol Seeds Libon	VCEW 62	600	30,000	Php 1.20
Albay/RASI Leg. City	VBEW 62	3,662	183,000	Php 1.20
Albay/RASI Leg. City	J2AW	179	5,687.6	Php 1.20
SUB TOTAL		8,326	413,063.2	
B. PARTIALLY DAMAGED				
Province/ Warehouse	Variety	Volume- Bag	Volume- Kg.	Minimum Bid Price/KG
Albay/Abacorp	VUEW 62	3,000	149,700	Php 3.50
Albay/Abacorp	VBEW 62	1,000	49,900	Php 3.50
Albay/Abacorp	VCEW 62	1,000	50,000	Php 3.50
Albay/Abacorp	VWEW 62	800	39,900	Php 3.50
Albay/Tabaco GID 1 & 2	VWEW 62	2,200	109,780	Php 3.50
Albay/Tabaco GID 1 & 2	VBEW 62	1,500	74,850	Php 3.50
Albay/Tabaco GID 1 & 2	VUEW 62	1,700	84,630	Php 3.50
Albay/NFA owned Ligao	VCEF 62	807	40,215	Php 3.50
Albay/NFA owned Ligao	VWEW 62	4,600	230,000	Php 3.50
Albay/NFA owned Ligao	PG1-S	79	4,166	Php 3.50
Albay/NFA owned Ligao	PG2-S	9	449.15	Php 3.50
Albay/Santiago- Tabaco	VWEW 62	2,000	99,800	Php 3.50
Albay/Santiago- Tabaco	VXCW 62	500	24,950	Php 3.50
Albay/Bicol Seeds, Libon	VCEW 62	1,000	50,000	Php 3.50
Albay/RASI Leg. City	VBEW 62	500	25,000	Php 3.50
Albay/RASI Leg. City	VCEF 62	63	3,150	Php 3.50
SUB-TOTAL		20,758	1,036,690.15	
Camargues/Sur GID	VWEF 6	145	7,250.6	Php 3.50
Cam. Sur/Balintawak	VCEW 62	1,484	74,209.6	Php 3.50
SUB-TOTAL		1,629	81,460.2	
TOTAL		30,713	1,531,213.55	

The above items may be inspected at the aforesaid warehouses during office hours. Offerors shall be required to post a bid bond equivalent to ten (10%) percent of the total amount based on the bidder's price offer. It shall be in form of Cash, Manager's check or Cashier's check payable to NFA.

Bid documents such as tender form, including terms and conditions shall be issued only to interested and qualified bidders upon submission of the Letter of Intent accompanied by the following documents:

1. Current NFA Certificate of Registration or license as poultry/hog raiser or as feedmill;
2. The poultry/hog raiser or feedmill should have been in operation for at least 2 years. Feedmillers must have hammer mill or technical capabilities in case of scientific formulation of feeds;
3. Barangay certification where the poultry/hog raising business/feedmill was being operated;
4. Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) Registration with updated payment (Official Receipt)
5. Income Tax Return for year 2005 duly received and stamped by the BIR;
6. Financial Statement for the year 2005 duly certified by a CPA

Representative authorized to transact business with NFA for this particular bidding must present Special Power of Attorney in case of Single Proprietorship or a Board resolution if representing a corporation/partnership. Likewise, a SEC registration is required for corporation/partnership and DTI registration for Single proprietorship.

A non-refundable/non-transferable bidding fee of P 3,000.00 shall be paid by any pre-qualified bidder to delay bidding forms as well as processing cost.

All documents submitted must be duly "authenticated" upon submission otherwise it will not be officially admitted as pre-qualification documents.

Only qualified bidders who passed during the pre-qualification screening will be allowed to participate in the bidding.

Deadline for the issuance of bidding documents to pre-qualified bidders shall not be later than 5:00 PM of January 29, 2007.

The National Food Authority Region V shall reserved 25% of the bidded variety for local small poultry and hog raisers.

The pre-bidding conference and bidding proper will be conducted at the NFA Conference Room, 2nd Floor, NFA Regional Office, Pier Site, Legazpi City on the following schedules:

Pre-Bidding conference January 30, 2007 10:00 AM

Submission of bids/Opening of Bids January 30, 2007 1:30 PM

For further inquiries/details you may contact the RBAC Secretariat at Telephone Numbers (052) 480-7015; 480-7933, 820-0018.

NFA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO ACCEPT OR REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS. TO WAIVE ANY DEFECTS OR FORMALITIES FOUND THEREIN AND ACCEPT ONLY SUCH BIDS WHICH OF ITS JUDGEMENT ARE MOST REASONABLE AND MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO NFA. THE RECOMMENDATION/DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE AS CONFIRMED & APPROVED BY THE NFA ADMINISTRATOR OR HIS DULY AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE SHALL BE DEEMED FINAL.

(Sgd.) JOSE B. GUEVARA
RBAC Chairman

(PDI-January 18, 19 & 20, 2007)

NEGROS OCCIDENTAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
Cabankalan City, Negros Occidental • Tel. Nos. 4712-339; 746-9255 Fax No. (034) 4712-829
E-mail: nococo@glinesn.com.ph Website: www.nococo.ph

January 11, 2007

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

The NEGROS OCCIDENTAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. (NOCECO) is inviting all interested contractors to pre-qualify and bid for the SUPPLY OF MATERIALS AND CONSTRUCTION OF A 69KV SUB-TRANSMISSION LINE FROM BINALBAGAN TO LA CASTELLANA WITH A TOTAL LENGTH OF 20 KMS.

The 69 Sub-transmission line will utilize 22 mtrs. pre-stressed rectangular "I" Section Concrete Pole.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures. Interested bidders shall comply with Accreditation Requirements (for submission to the Accreditation Chairman, Noel P. Garbo) as follows:

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| a) Company Profile | e) Latest Income Tax Return (ITR) |
| b) Business Registration | f) List of Clients for a period of three (3) years |
| c) Business Permit | g) Financial Statement |
| d) BIR/VAT Certificate | |

And must be able to pay Php10,000.00 (for this particular bidding only and not refundable) for bid documents during the pre-bid conference.

Schedule of Activities are as follows:

BIDDING SCHEDULES	
Intent to Bid	January 24, 2007
Accreditation Period	January 25 - February 2, 2007
Pre-Bid Conference	February 9, 2007
Public Bidding	February 19, 2007

NOCECO reserves the right to reject any/all bid without any reason, waive any formality therein, accept proposal most advantageous to the cooperative and assumes no obligation to compensate or indemnify any bidder for expenses or losses that may be incurred in the preparation of bid nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) LAMBERTO M. CANLAS
General Manager

(PDI-Jan. 18 & 19, 2007)

'ONE FOLLOW ME' SERVICE OF MICROSOFT

Photo shows Marnie Tolosa (leftmost), Enterprise Partner Manager, Microsoft Philippines, briefing the President on the One Follow Me™ service of Microsoft during the recently held inauguration of the Microsoft Southern Philippines office. Through this service, Overseas Filipino Workers can utilize some of the most cost-effective methods to stay connected with their families and remit funds. Also participating in the demonstration are (from left) Rep. Raul del Mar, First District, Cebu City; Rep. Antonio Cuenco, Second District, Cebu City; Cebu Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia, Tourism Sec. Ace Durano; and TJ Javier, General Manager, Microsoft Philippines.



Port of Iloilo surpasses collection target by 108 %.

BUREAU OF CUSTOMS COMMISSIONER Napoleon L. Morales has lauded the District Port of Iloilo for exceeding its collection target for CY 2006 by an astounding 205.76%.

The commissioner in his letter to Atty. Lourdes Mangaoang, district collector of Port Iloilo, pointed out "Your District is assigned to collect a target of 147 Million for CY 2006. For the period Jan. 1 to Dec. 14, 2006, you have actually collected a total of P302 Million or 205.76 of your total goal. You have actually exceeded your year-end target by P155 million."

Based on actual Customs data on collection performance, Port of Iloilo's year end (Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 2006) take has reached P306 million, an excess of P159 Million (108.19%) or more than twice the 2006 target.

Under previous leadership, the Port of Iloilo is one of the laggards in customs collection not meeting or barely meeting its targets, but under the helm of Mangaoang, the district is now one of the bureau's top performers.

Commissioner Morales also expressed his confidence that the Port of Iloilo will be a performer in the coming year, as he asked Lawyer Mangaoang to stay on course with her collection efforts.

The commissioner, likewise, challenged the lady collector saying "I am confident that you will continue to pursue our main objective of attaining the Bureau's goal. I am counting on your full cooperation and support on this endeavor. Please exceed your year-end target some more."

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NOTICE OF DISSOLUTION

Rodita S. Bombita Josephine L. Nunes
Ludy B. Bolague John Raymond Grundy

We, the American Longevity Philippines with an address at Unit C, 8th Floor PDCP Bank Center, P. Leviste St., Salcedo Village, Makati City has shorten its term of corporate existence effective December 5, 2006.

(PDI-Jan. 11, 18 & 25, 2007)

OBITUARIES

"I am the resurrection and the life
He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies;
And whoever believes in Me will never die"

**Lovingly Remembered
The 8th Death Anniversary**
January 19, 1945 - January 18, 1999

Jonathan Matthew Tee

Please say a prayer for the eternal repose of his soul
Linda, Jet-jet, Bernie and Charlotte

The Holy Mass will be offered today, January 18th at the following churches:

St. Alphonsus Mary de Liguori Parish, Magallanes Village 6:15 am & 6:00 pm
Santuario de San Jose, Greenhills, San Juan 7:15 am
Mary the Queen Parish, Greenhills, San Juan 6:00 am & 6:00 pm
St. Francis of Assisi Parish Church, Shaw Blvd., Mandaluyong 7:00 am & 6:00 pm
Redemptorist Church, Baclaran 6:45 am, 9:30 am & 5:45 pm

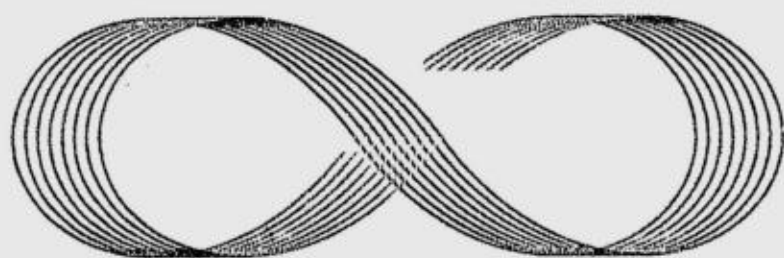
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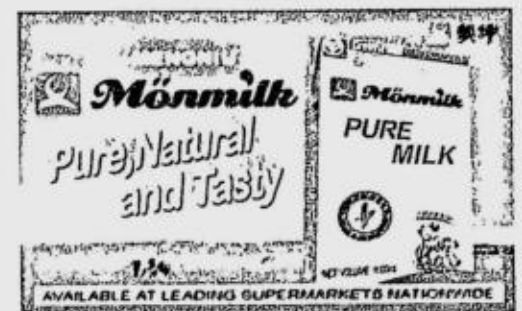
IN THIS ISSUE

■ **Step-by-step baked**
'gindara'/C4

LIFESTYLE

Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

sms feedback: inquirer life name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 3333 (Smart) or email us at lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph



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KITCHEN RESCUE
Reggie Aspiras

'Bibingka' beyond the holidays

BACK TO HOLIDAY BACKLOG... All these recipes were requested over the holidays. It is comforting to know that December will come again and that *bibingka* will not be eaten only at Christmas time! Here it is—*bibingka* recipes galore!

I would like to make *bibingkang malagkit* for business for Christmas. It will be a big help for my husband. More power po!

LANI

Sorry, Lani, but I had to source this one from the Diamond Star of Philippine Cuisine, chef Myrna Segismundo. Actually, it is her *yaya Luz's* recipe. *Pang-Valentine na lang*, make them heart-shaped.

Bibingka Malagkit

1½ c purple rice (Balatnaw variety from Baguio)
3 c sticky white rice
1 grated coconut
3 c water (for extracting coco cream and milk)
½ k sugar
Combine two kinds of rice in a pot and add enough water to cover mixture. Cook as you would steamed rice.
Combine coconut with 1 c water, extract coco cream. Divide cream into two portions.
Add 2 c water to the grated coconut to make coconut milk.

In a preheated pot, pour one portion of the coco cream and simmer over medium flame until the oil separates and a sediment called *latik* settles at the bottom of the pot. Separate the oil from the *latik* and set aside.

In the same pot, combine the remaining coco cream and milk. Simmer over medium flame until a creamy consistency is achieved. Add the sugar, stir and continue simmering until the mixture starts to thicken and get oily again.

Add the cooked rice a little at a time, stirring constantly to mix well. Reduce to low heat and cover pot to allow the *bibingka* to simmer a while, around five to 10 minutes.

Transfer *bibingka* to a serving plate and allow to completely cool down before serving. Garnish the top with the remaining *latik*.

Have you tried the *bibingka soufflé*? It is quite interesting. Tried it in Shangri-La when I was in town. Can you please give me a recipe? If you have a regular *bibingkang galapong* recipe, that would be great.

MICHI TIU

Yes, the soufflé is interesting. It is a creation of Annie Guerrero of Center for Culinary Arts and she is proud to share the recipe, which was awarded a gold medal. She went even further and shared her *bibingkang galapong* recipe. If you want recipes like this, then you must get a copy of her "Cooking with Coconut" cookbook. Enjoy!

Bibingka Soufflé

4 c coconut milk
2 c sugar
4 whole eggs, beaten
1½ c cornstarch
4 pc salted eggs, chopped
Combine coconut milk and sugar. Slightly heat until dissolved.
Combine the cornstarch with half of the warm coconut milk. Put back into the mixture, cook until thick stirring continuously.
Off the fire, temper the eggs into the mixture and cook until thick.
Set aside to cool. Add the salted eggs.



CHEF Myrna Segismundo

ROGER CARPIO

3 c egg whites
2 c sugar
6 tbsp cornstarch
For garnish:
1 tbsp queso de bola
1 tsp toasted coconut
Beat egg whites until soft peak forms.
Gradually add sugar.
Fold in cornstarch and mix well. Fold in base to egg white mixture.
Pipe into buttered ramekins and sprinkle with sugar. Bake at 350° F.
Garnish with grated queso de bola and toasted coconut. Serve with Creme Anglaise on the side.

Creme Anglaise:
2½ c fresh milk
½ c egg yolks
½ c sugar
2 tsp vanilla extract
Scald milk, combine sugar and egg yolks. Temper egg yolks mixture into the milk.
Cook until thickened, stirring continuously. Add vanilla.

Bibingkang Galapong

1½ k rice, soaked for three to five hours
8 whole eggs, beaten
1 tall can evaporated milk
1 c coconut milk
1 k sugar

You can
have the
popular
rice cake
heart-shaped
for Valentine
or as
soufflé

½ c butter, melted
¼ c + 2 tbsp baking powder
2 tsp active dry yeast
Topping:
Salted eggs or cottage cheese
Garnish:
Butter
Coconuts, fresh and grated
Drain rice. Add water one inch above the rice then grind very finely to produce thick consistency.

Blend all ingredients together. Strain if the mixture becomes lumpy. Let the mixture rest for about 30 minutes to one hour.

Pour about ½ c mixture in a banana-lined round *bibingka* pan. Top with salted eggs or cottage cheese or combination of both.

Cook in *bibingkahan*, charcoal or electric *bibingka* oven.

Spread each *bibingka* with butter. Serve with fresh grated coconut.
Yields 18-20 pieces

E-mail the author at raspiras@inquirer.com.ph

BIBINGKA Soufflé

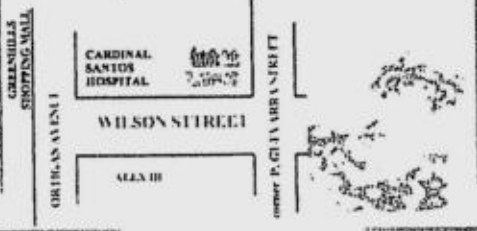


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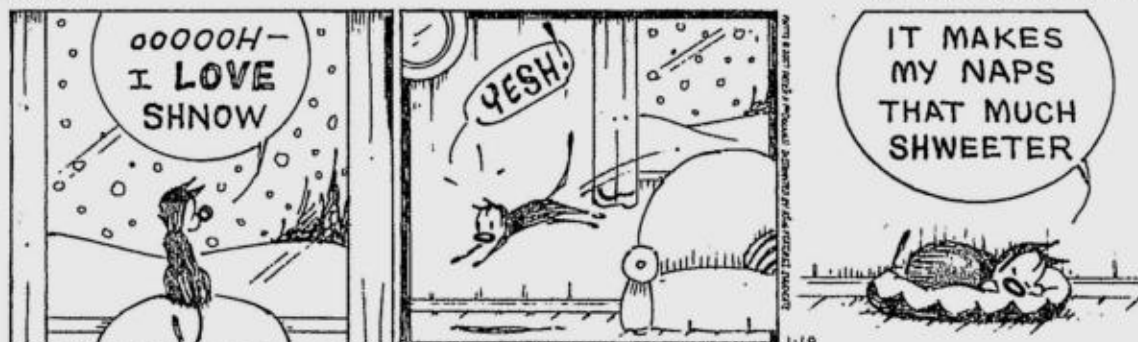


MUTTS

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LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO



ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY

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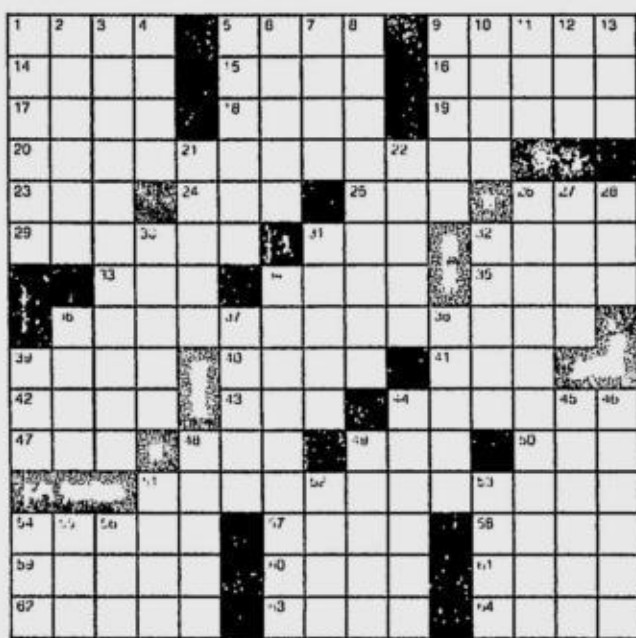
DAILY CROSSWORD

HOROSCOPE

CONCEPTS SU DOKU

ACROSS

- 1 Lose vibrancy
- 5 Punta del
- 9 Skiers' ride
- 14 Mythical monster
- 15 Van Halen or Trebek
- 16 Ins and outs
- 17 Equipment
- 18 Occupancy fee
- 19 Mongol tents
- 20 Start of a motto
- 23 Environmental prefix
- 24 Double-crosser
- 25 Mel of the Polo Grounds
- 26 Spotted structure
- 29 Sentence structure
- 31 Double Lili
- 32 Bullets, briefly
- 33 Air circulator
- 34 Cartoonist Silverstein
- 35 Pork cut
- 36 Part 2 of motto
- 39 Actor Estrada
- 40 "Java"

By Barry Silk
McLean, VA

1/18/07

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

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1/18/07

- DOWN
- 1 Old-fashioned folk
- 2 Part of 54D

- 3 Mosquito eaters
- 4 Saarinen of Finland
- 5 Aural buildup
- 6 Icy forecast
- 7 Campsite sight
- 8 No wallflower
- 9 Lovers' secret meeting
- 10 Boxing match
- 11 4 of dates
- 12 Part of AARP
- 13 Sound of a leak
- 21 Unclogging product
- 22 Water, elec. etc.
- 26 1961 hit by the Corsairs
- 27 Nice girlfriend
- 28 Came out on top
- 30 Discussions
- 31 French dear
- 32 Warning signal
- 34 Home to the Philadelphia Athletics
- 36 Like the Sahara

- 37 Second prime
- 38 Barjo sound
- 39 Threshold
- 44 Proverb
- 45 Commuter's computer
- 46 Allen and Coen
- 48 Sharpens
- 49 Unadorned
- 51 Skeddaddled
- 52 Nondairy spread
- 53 Barrett of Hollywood
- 54 See 20A, 36A and 51A
- 55 Moreover
- 56 Perce

YOU BORN TODAY: You're fun-loving and highly individualistic! You have a wonderful imagination. One part of you is childlike forever. You make an excellent parent, but you personally need a lot of stimulation. You like excitement and being entertained. The year ahead will please you because it offers new avenues and fresh, new beginnings! Open any door.

Birthdate of: Mark Messier, hockey player; Kevin Costner, actor; A.A. Milne, author



ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Today's New Moon is the perfect opportunity to study how you relate to authority. You're a feisty sign who does not suffer fools gladly.



TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Is there any further training that would improve your life or your job right now? This is the perfect day to contemplate this.



GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): What can you do to wrap up loose details regarding inheritances, estates, wills, taxes and debt in your life? This is a good day to start.



CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Each New Moon offers us a chance to make improvements. Today's New Moon is directly opposite your sign and urges you to scrutinize how you relate to those who are closest to you.



LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): How efficiently do you handle your job and your daily chores? What can you do to improve your style of working?



VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): We work every day, but we also have to play to have a good balance in our lives. Are you giving yourself enough playtime? Are you including romantic moments in your life?



LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Today's New Moon emphasizes everything having to do with home, family and real estate matters for your sign. How can you make improvements in these areas? What can you do to make your home look and feel more cozy?



SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Daily communication is important. Do you listen to others when they talk to you? Are you as clear in your communications as you can be? Think about this today.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): This is the best day all year for you to think about your relationship with money and your earnings. (What are not your bank account.) What are your money plans for the future?



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): This is the only New Moon in your sign all year. It's a chance for you to make some resolutions about how to improve your relationships, and also how to improve your image.



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): At this time you might be more aware of your spiritual life and how important faith is. Do you give this much thought?



PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Friendships are important. Studies indicate that friendships promote your health as well as your well-being. Would you like to have you as a friend?

Conceptis Sudoku

by Dave Green



Difficulty Level ★★

1/18

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

8	2	6	7	9	4	5	3	1
5	4	3	6	2	1	9	7	8
1	9	7	5	3	8	2	6	4
7	1	2	3	4	5	8	9	6
3	6	5	8	1	9	4	2	7
4	8	9	2	6	7	3	1	5
6	3	8	1	5	2	7	4	9
9	7	1	4	8	3	6	5	2
2	5	4	9	7	6	1	8	3

Difficulty Level ★★



1
SEASON gindara fillet with salt and pepper. Brown both sides in hot oil, preferably canola oil.



2
PLACE gindara in the center of square piece of foil. Top with rosemary, lemon zest and garlic. Pour white wine and olive oil over fish. Add salt and pepper to taste.



3
WRAP securely with the rest of the foil, but not too tight to allow the steam to circulate inside. Place on top of round gratin dish.



4
BAKE at 375°F for 12-15 minutes.

STEP BY STEP

It will be all Greek to you

Text by Vangie Baga-Reyes
Photos by Roger Carpio

AFTER THE BINGING AND overindulging during the holidays, don't you just want to go slow and eat

something light yet tasty and, yes, healthy?

Fish is always the best bet when you are looking for something healthy. The fats in fish are said to help prevent heart disease and may also aid in preventing Alzheimer's and strokes.

Psari Psito, Greek for baked fish, is a Mediterranean dish

packed with the rich flavors of herbs. The fish is cooked in its own juice. Gindara, sea bass and halibut are preferred for this quick and easy-to-follow recipe.

"Mediterranean cooking always keeps the dishes simple, straightforward, unpretentious and fresh," says chef Jeremiah Go of Mati Restaurant (G/F, Power Plant Mall, Rockwell Center, Makati; tels. 8982506 and 8976284).

Go uses fillet of gindara that is easily available in the market and is more affordable than sea bass. A kilo of gindara at Shopwise costs P1,080, while sea bass sells for P1,650/k.

Psari Psito, one of Mati's bestsellers, is first seasoned with salt and pepper then seared to lock in its natural flavor. Wrap in aluminum foil so the meat comes out moist.

This fish dish is best served on a round

gratin dish for an attractive presentation.

Ingredients
180 g gindara or sea bass, fillet
1 g salt
1 g ground black pepper
5 g fresh rosemary, chopped
5 g lemon zest, chopped

HEALTHY
and light
Psari Psito



5
TAKE out fish from oven and carefully open foil. Transfer fish onto the same round gratin dish used for baking and pour the rest of the ingredients on top of fish. Top with chopped parsley and serve.

30 g garlic, slivered
45 ml white wine
45 ml extra virgin olive oil
2 g flat-leaf parsley, roughly chopped

For suggestions, e-mail the author at vba-ga@inquirer.com.ph

Weekend promo for families

DIAMOND HOTEL PRESENTS "FAMILY Day Promo" every Saturday and Sunday at its Yurakuen Japanese Restaurant. A *shabu-shabu* meal consisting of appetizer, soup, sashimi, rice, and eat-all-you-can meat and vegetables is available for P1,950+. Kids below six years old can have the eat-all-you-can meat and vegetable *shabu-shabu* for free. Also available is the Kiddie Bento Box for P250+. Call 5283000.

MANILA Pavilion Hotel's Rotisserie presents "Five Dishes of Great Seafoods" for lunch, 11:30 a.m.-3 p.m., Monday-Friday; and dinner, 6:30-10:30 p.m., Monday-Saturday, the whole month of January. The five dishes are Poached Salmon, Grilled Seabass, Fish and Seafood Bouillabaisse, Escabeche of Sardines, and Seabass and King Prawns on Spanish and Mushroom Ragout. Meanwhile, Seasons offers "A Taste of Mediterranean." Call 5261212 local 2505.

HYATT Hotel and Casino's Li Li welcomes Year of the Pig with a traditional Chinese New Year Set Menu consisting of Dried Sea Moss, Abalone, Dried Scallops, Sea Cucumber, Dried Mushrooms, Fish Maw, Dried Oysters, Soy Chicken, Pigs' Trotters, among others. Call 2451234.

DINING OUT



COCORAMA (6/F, Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Mandaluyong City) offers steaks and eggs selections, such as US Angus Topblade, Local Premium Porterhouse, Pork Chops, Burger Steaks, among others. Waffle selections include Travolta, Choco Mojo, Berry White, Jackson 5, Island Escapade, Banana Caramel Rock. Cocorama will also serve French Toast selections. Also available are Green Eggs and Spam and an omelet burrito, Chicken Chingladera.

HAPPI LUCKY, a Chinese fast-food restaurant with budget-friendly prices, opened its first branch at the South Wing of the Main Mall of the SM Mall of Asia. Among the items on the Happi Lucky menu are Happi Lucky Soyed Chicken Leg Quarter, a restaurant specialty, P89; Kangkong with Pork Belly and Chinese Bagoong, P49; and Fried Chicken, P69 (one-piece meal) and P89 (two-piece meal). The restaurant also serves rice meals such as Beef Brisket, P79; Fish Fillet Taosil, P59; Chopsuey meal, P75; and Happi Lucky BBQ Pork Asado, P75. All rice meals come with a glass of red *gula-man*, the restaurant's signature drink. Dimsum and noodle choices include Chicken Feet, Lumpiang Shanghai, Siopao, Siomai, Wanton and Beef Brisket Noodles and Pansit Canton. Call 5560588.

HULA-HULA Seafood and Barbecue Restaurant, known for its jumbo belly chops and premium grilled pork barbecue, also serves Luau Feast for the entire family. It consists of steaks and grilled seafood items. Other popular items are Island Sushi Selections and Island Curry Plates. Hula is at Shangri-La Street Scape, Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong City (9103218) and Westgate, Filinvest City (7712291/7712289).

BUBBA Gump Shrimp Co. in Greenbelt 3, Ayala Center Makati, offers large servings of Southern and Cajun-style dishes ideal for sharing with friends or family. For appetizers, try the Run Across America Sampler of Far Out Dip and Chips, Chilly Shrimp, Spicy Chicken Strips, Hush Pups, and Mama Blue's Fried Shrimp. Entrees include Shrimper's Heaven, Shrimp Fajitas, After the Storm "Bucket of Boat Trash," Forrest's Shrimp Net Catch, Captain's Fish and Chips, and Dixie Style Baby Back Ribs. E-mail customer@bubbagump.com.ph or call 7575154.



Mindanao then and now

From page C4

take several years before I would see Mindanao again on personal vacations and for work. By then, food was always the focus.

More than the volcanoes, Camiguin will always be an island of specialties such as the *piñatos*, *pastel* and *barquillos*.

In South Cotabato, I had the best *imbao* (big clams) at a roadside restaurant and bought dirt-cheap fruits.

T'boli delicacies

In Lake Sebu, *tilapia* was harvested from its waters and we ate every cook-

ing version of it including one called *nilagpang*. That's fish broiled then sautéed after which evaporated milk instead of coconut milk is added.

Falen, our T'boli guide, cooked *binacol*, their version of small fish (*tabios* or *ayungin*) cooked in a bamboo tube with lemon grass, tomatoes and a bit of salt. A visit to a T'boli home showed us not only the weaving area but also the kitchen, embers still hot from cooking breakfast.

In Zamboanga, I had my first taste of *satti* with its soupy tomato sauce. The best time I had was savoring *durian* and *marang* standing on the mar-

ket sidewalk.

In Tawi-Tawi, I saw unfamiliar fish in the market and ate wild *lanzones* that were huge and sour. I regretted not tasting the cassava processed into cake, which was eaten there with seafood.

This year I hope there will be more Mindanao provinces to visit and food to taste. I look forward to eating the best *lechon* of Ozamis City, which one reader wrote about. And to having all the fruits I can eat in Makilala, Cotabato.

E-mail the author at pinoy-food04@yahoo.com.

THE CONSUMER

A glaring omission

By Linda B. Bolido

IN THE UNITED STATES, THE POST-holiday season is another time for an "exchange of gifts." People who got things that are unwanted, not needed or of the wrong size troop to the malls to exchange the items for something that will fit them or they want better.

People may even return a gift simply because they would rather have the cash. Even items purchased by credit card can be exchanged for cash.

But, in the Philippines, the framers of the Consumer Code seem to have forgotten what should be a basic consumer right.

A Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) spokesperson said "as a matter of practice and policy, a consumer cannot return and seek a refund for an item purchased for any reason at all."

What Section 2, Rule 6, Chapter 4 of Department Administrative Order No. 2, Series of 1993 (Implementing Rules of the Consumer Act) says is: "The words: 'No return, No Exchange,' or any other words to such effect shall not appear on any label or literature of a consumer product or on any receipt for the purchase of such product."

In other words, while the words are no longer allowed, it is up to the store whether or not it will accept exchange or return of purchases.

We should therefore commend establishments like the Rustan's Group of Companies, SM and Robinsons chains for making it a policy to let customers exchange purchases within a certain time period.

I had to ask DTI about the official policy because of two incidents after the holidays.

An *INQUIRER* employee tried to exchange the day after its purchase a bicycle, which his son thought he wanted. But the next day, even before they could remove the bike's packaging, the boy had completely lost interest in it.

The father tried to exchange the bike for other items in the supermarket. The store said company policy prohibited the return of the purchased item even if it was to be exchanged for other things.

Bad experience

In another store, Gabrielle Lim of Pasig City did manage to make the exchange but the experience was a most unpleasant one.

Lim asked, "Why do most stores treat people who are exchanging items after the holidays so differently from regular-paying customers?"

Lim's daughter got a shirt from an aunt that was two sizes smaller. Mother and daughter went to the nearest branch of the store carrying the brand but were told they

could only make the exchange at the branch where the item was bought.

Though it was embarrassing to let the giver know they were exchanging the shirt, they decided it was better to ask where the shirt was bought than be stuck with something the recipient could not wear.

At the right branch, however, the mother said she had to endure the long faces of the sales people who obviously did not want to process the exchange. They made her wait for a long time as they verified that the item was indeed bought there. At one point, she was even told the list was missing.

She found the whole experience ironical as the store proclaimed that its policy on return/exchange was meant "to make your (customer) shopping enjoyable and convenient..."

In contrast, she mentioned her very pleasant experience at Rustan's and its affiliated stores, particularly Marks & Spencer. Although an item she wanted changed was no longer available, the staff processed the exchange, replacing the item with something of the same price.

Lim said, "This is why, despite the price difference, I do most of my shopping for gifts at Rustan's and its sister companies—life is too short to put up with grumpy sales ladies."

Indeed!

Commendable

Once I bought a bag at Rustan's that I wanted to use on a trip. At the airport, using the bag for the first time, I noticed that there was a tear in the lining.

As I was going to be away for longer than a week, I asked a friend to let Rustan's know of my predicament and to tell them I would change the merchandise as soon as I got back. When I went to the store upon my return, they changed the bag without fuss.

Just as pleasant was my experience at Handyman store at Robinsons Place Ermita. I wanted an automatic voltage regulator, which was covered by a lifetime warranty, repaired.

Rather than make me wait for the product to be fixed, Handyman replaced it with a brand-new product.

Not just for shopping

Meanwhile, SM's Mall of Asia gives shoppers one more reason to go malling. The store opened recently a new business center that will allow people to transact business with certain government agencies while they are in the mall.

Among the agencies that have set up shop inside the mall are the Social Security System, Bureau of Internal Revenue and DTI.

LIFESTYLE

COUNTRY COOKING

Micky Fenix

Mindanao then and now

T'BOLI girls in the kitchen

HENY SISON
CULINARY SCHOOL

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

February 1 (Thursday) 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) INTRODUCTION TO JAPANESE COOKING by: Chef Koichi Kondo, licensed cook from Ehime, Japan and food consultant to various Japanese restaurants. Learn all-time favorites Japanese dishes applicable to home & professional cooking such as: Sushi, Sashimi, Sukiyaki, Miso Soup, Tempura, Teriyaki, Udon Noodles in Clay Pot, Chicken Teriyaki & Japanese Fried Rice. P2,500

February 1 (Thursday) 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (classroom B) FOOD CART V-HOUSE OF PANDESAI by: Chef Vicki Villanueva, from Siars & Buz, let Chef Vicki share with you her wealth of knowledge and experience of pastries and restaurant concepts, skills, techniques & operations. Recipes: Bakwag Pandesal, My Mom's Special Pandesal, Pandesal Pulot, Egg Pandesal, Whole Wheat Pandesal, Cheese Pandesal, Adobo Pandesal, Pizza Pandesal, Ham Cheese Pandesal. Demonstration w/ student participation. P2,500

February 2 (Friday) 9:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. (classroom A) BASIC CAKES & ICINGS FOR BEGINNERS by: Henry Sison. Butter Cake with Butter Icing, Moist Chocolate Cake with Fudge Icing, Mocha Cake with No-Milk Butter Icing, Lemon Chiffon Cake with Boiled Icing & Sponge Cake with Whipped Cream Icing. P1,500

February 2 (Friday) 2:00 - 5:00 p.m. (classroom A) QUICK BREADS by: Henry Sison. Apple Walnut Cake, Banana Nut Bread, Zucchini Bread, Apple-Cinnamon Muffins, Dark Moist Bran Muffins and Carrot Muffins. P1,500

February 3 (Saturday) 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) NEW CLASS! BACKYARD GRILLING & BARBECUE WORKSHOP PART 2 by: Chef Sam de Leon, Food Consultant, Stylist, Photographer, Caterer, Food demonstrator and Culinary Competition Events Consultant specializing in Basic & Classical Cookery: International & Asian Cuisine. (Limited to 18 students only) The Chef shares with you in this full participation workshop a few of his signature Grilling and Barbecue all time favorites. Recipes: Charbroiled SAM'S Baby Back Ribs w/ Barbecue Sauce and Grilled Corn, Grilled Blue Marlin w/ Sauce Granobolice, Grilled Tuna Belly in Kikkoman Cilantro Marinade w/ Tamari-Miso Dip, Grilled Skirt w/ Hot Chili Soy Vinegar, Grilled Chicken Breasts w/ Green Pepper Corn Sauce, Grilled Prawns w/ Beurre Noisette and Charbroiled Alimango w/ Roasted Siling Pangang Vinegar-Bagoong Isda Dip. P2,300

February 5-6 (Monday-Tuesday) 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) CAKE DECORATING COURSE I by: Henry Sison. Learn the basics of cake decorating: icing, color, star, shell, dots, outline and scallop borders, the rose, figure piping, flowers & bouquets. Each student will bake & decorate a character birthday cake. Full participation. P4,000

February 5 (Monday) 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (classroom B) NEW CLASS! CHINESE CHRISTMAS FEAST by: Chef Katherine Sion, restaurateur (Jing Hao & Fat Kai restaurant), caterer and an expert in Chinese cuisine. "Begger's" Chicken, Chinese Sucking Pig, Fried Crab with salt and pepper, Minced Meat w/ Lettuce, Shrimp Salad, Tikoy. P3,000

February 6 (Tuesday) 9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. (classroom B) NEW CLASS! ALL ABOUT FRENCH MACARONS PART II by: Chef Vicki Villanueva. Learn step-by-step preparation. A most sought after give away for Valentines and Weddings. Flavors include: Tiramisu Macarons, Green Tea, Salted Caramel, Hot Cinnamon and Black Forest. Reservation is requested! P1,850

February 6 (Tuesday) 1:30 - 4:30 p.m. (classroom B) NEW CLASS! SAVORY AND DESSERT CREPE by: Chef Vicki Villanueva. Recipes: Crepe Cake, Crepe Crepe, Mango w/ Vanilla Ice Cream Crepe, Hazelnut Crepe, Black Forest Chocolate Crepe, Ham, Cheese and Mushroom Crepe and Sausage w/ Bechamel Crepe. Reservation is requested! P1,850

February 7-8 (Wednesday - Thursday) 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) CAKE DECORATING COURSE II by: Henry Sison. Add amazing new skills to your cake decorating - the world of long flowers, distinctive borders, flower spray & specialty flowers. As a final project you will decorate a basketweave cake filled with cascading flower. Full participation. P4,000

February 8 (Thursday) 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. (classroom B) JAPANESE RICE TOPPING by: Chef Koichi Kondo. Recipes: Oyako-don (Chicken & Egg on Rice), Gyudon (Beef Bowl), Tendon (Tempura Bowl), Katsudon (Pork Cutlet Bowl), Soboro-don (Minced Chicken & Egg Bowl), Ton Tenryaki-don (Chicken Tenryaki). P1,700

February 8 (Thursday) 1:30 - 5:00 p.m. (classroom B) SUSHI CLASS by: Chef Koichi Kondo. "Temaku-Zushi (Do-It Yourself Sushi Rolls), Bata-Zushi (Scattered Sushi), Inari-Zushi (Sushi Pockets), Futo-Maki Zushi (Thick-Rolled Sushi), Teku-Maki (Hand-rolled Tuna Sushi), Kappa-Maki (Sea Cucumber Sushi) and California Maki. P1,700

February 9 (Friday) 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) NEW CLASS! CHOCOLATICS ANONYMOUS by: Chef Vivian Syyp, Private Chef/Caterer, Associates in Occupational Studies, Culinary Arts, with honors. The Culinary Institute of America, Hyatt Park, New York. "Chocolate Candied Orange Peel, Chocolate Truffles, Chocolate Biscotti, Chocolate Eclairs/Proliferates, Chocolate Madeleines & Chocolate Souffle. P2,000

February 10 (Saturday) 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (classroom A) HEALTHY GOURMET - SOUTH BEACH DIET PHASE 1 by: Jacqueline H. Allege, owner of Ruzel Dairy Farm, Swiss-Pinoy restaurateur (Vieux Charet Swiss restaurant), organic caterer and food consultant (Petra's naturally green, global, gourmet). This class is suitable for all people who want to be able to cook healthy dishes, deepen their knowledge of nutrition and weight control, as well as people with health concerns, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and other dietary restrictions. This class teaches wholesome recipes which reintroduce carbohydrates with complete recipe booklets for phase 2 and 3 of the South Beach Diet. P1,500plus P700 per recipe booklet

February 12 (Monday) 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (classroom A) PARADE OF PIES, TARTS & CHEESECAKES by: Henry Sison. French Apple Pie with Streusel Topping and Caramel Sauce, Turtle Pie, Banana Cream Pie with Whipped Cream and Caramel Topping, Mango Tart, Peach Walnut Pie, Blueberry Cheesecake and White Chocolate Cheesecake. P1,700

February 12 (Monday) 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (classroom B) NEW CLASS! RICE TOPPING AT IBA PAI by: Chef Katherine Sion. Braised Chicken with Mushroom with Rice, Braised Beef with Rice, Saute Shrimp with Chai Sauce with Rice, Braised Pork with Rice, Saute Fish Fillet with Bean Curd in Oyster Sauce, Quampang (Fukien Rice). P1,950

February 13 (Tuesday) 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) A TASTE OF LIFE RECIPES: PART 1 (Most Requested) by: Henry Sison. Barillo, Pulveron, Pastillas de Leche, Pastillas de Ube and Special Buko Pie. P1,500

February 13 (Tuesday) 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (classroom B) NEW CLASS! MEAT PROCESSING I by: Chef Vicki Villanueva. Open a rewarding all day dining (takeout) or home based business. Apply the new concepts, principles and techniques of making a longansa, chorizo, tocino, corned beef, tapa, luncheon meat, embolito from scratch. The preparation of ice tea, atchara and flavored rice, and lunch is included. P2,800

February 14 (Wednesday) 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (classroom A) SECRETS NO MORE! by: Henry Sison. "Decadent Chocolate Cake with Fudge Icing & Caramel Sauce, Lemon Torte, Ensaymada, Almond Sanzival, Strawberry Shortcake & Ube Cake. P3,000

February 15 (Thursday) 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) JAPANESE COOKING 3 by: Chef Koichi Kondo. Recipes: Yaksoo, Yak-Udon, Tamagoyaki, Sakoro Steak, Ebi-Fry, Korokke, Kani Salad & Coffee Jelly. P1,700

February 15 (Thursday) 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. (classroom B) TECHNIQUES OF FINE COOKING I (Featuring Chicken) by: Chef Vicki Villanueva. Hands-on preparation and cooking of chicken. Each student shall be assigned whole chicken to butcher and debone. Learn how to grill, roast, stew, fry, saute, steam and make sauces. Recipes include: Chicken Gallantina, Chicken Cordon Bleu, Chicken Sate, Classic Roasted Herb Chicken, Chicken Nuggets, Chicken Caesar

Salad, Chicken Fricassee and Chicken Teriyaki. Reservation is Requested! P2,750

February 16 (Friday) 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) NEW CLASS! A TASTE OF LIFE RECIPES: PART II by: Henry Sison. "Sapin-Sapin, Mocha Sansrival, Brazo de Mercedes, Cassava Cake and Pichi-Pichi. P1,500

February 17 (Saturday) 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (classroom A) ARTISANAL BREAD BAKING by: Jacqueline Allege. "Nothing equals the satisfaction of home baked breads. In this class you will learn how to bake savory and sweet quick breads. This class is a must for all who want to complete their skill of healthy cooking. This class will teach you how to prepare the most delicious healthy breads. And, if you want to turn it into a small business, we teach you how to. Recipes: Whole Wheat Sandwich Bread, Yogurt Graham, Herb-Onion-Bacon Bread, Yogurt Graham Bread, Bread Sticks, Focaccia, Whole Wheat Swiss Quark, Raisin Bread and Mango Tea Bread. P2,500

February 19 (Monday) 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) NEW CLASS! BUNS & BURGERS by: Chef Vicki Villanueva. How to open a burger joint? Recipes: Chonburger, The Best All Beef Burger, Chicken Burger, Vegetarian Burger, Commercial Beef Burger and Fish Burger. Learn to make Whole Wheat Pandesal Bun and Oatmeal Burger Bun. P2,650

February 19 (Monday) 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (classroom B) SIOPAO & MAI WORKSHOP by: Chef Katherine Sion. Chicken Bola-Bola, Asado Pao, Bola-bola Pao, Jumbo Siopao with Chinese Sausage, Chicken Asado Mami & Beef Mami. P2,500

February 20 (Tuesday) 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (classroom A) NEW CLASS! PRESERVING THE HARVEST by: Chef Carlo Estagile, one of our school's home-grown chefs who has proven his mettle as Executive Chef of Mezza Restaurant and Bar at Greenbelt 2, pastry consultant of Bakeshops and chef consultant to other multinational food brands. He is one of the resident chefs of IBC 13's A Taste of Life with Henry Sison. "Shelves of glistening, jewel-like jars, filled with preserved fruits and herbs..." That simple description sums up the rewards of canning and preserving. With this simple skill, we can enjoy those seasonal fruits any time of the year. In this course, we'll learn the fine art of drying and making Candied Orange Rind, Candied Glass Lemons, Candied Pineapples, Apple Chips, and Mint Jelly. P1,800

February 20 (Tuesday) 1:00 - 5:00 p.m. (classroom A) LET'S BOTTLE UP I by: Chef Juan Carlo Estagile. Putting up food for future enjoyment is a decidedly old-fashioned pursuit. Yet more and more cooks today are rediscovering it and even making a business out of it. In this course, you'll learn everything you need to know to bottle and preserve food efficiently, safely, beautifully, and of course, with delicious results. The outcome is sure to be a rainbow of jars filled with Dalandan Marmalade, Ginger Marmalade, Balcabao Filipino, Tawilis Sardines, Tuyo Pasta Salsa, Tomato Pasta Salsa, and even pickled onions and quail eggs. P1,500

February 20 (Tuesday) 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (classroom B) NEW CLASS! BAKING 101 (Strictly for Beginners) by: Chef Vicki Villanueva. "Learn the many things that are taken for granted - from breaking an egg to baking, finishing your cake & packaging. Learn vital techniques, purchasing, equipment production option. Please bring calculator, apron and notebook. Recipes include: Very Berry Cake w/ Chantilly Cream, Ube Chiffon Cake w/ buttercream, Buttercake and Angel Cake. Reservation is requested. Hands-On Class. P2,650

February 21 (Wednesday) 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) SPECIAL TABLE AND HOME DECOR FLOWER ARRANGEMENT by: Glenn Remorcia, floral designer. Table Centerpieces w/ actual demonstration and table setting presentation. Lecture, demonstration and hands-on production. Bring a pair of scissors. P3,000

February 22 (Thursday) 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) NEW CLASS! FLAVORS OF ITALY PART I by: Henry Sison. Come and learn the secrets and special tips in preparing a complete menu of classic Italian favorite with ease and flair. "BREAD - Pan di Prato (saltless bread from Prato), SALAD - Umbrian Bread Salad, SOUP: Mantua Spanish Soup, APPETIZER - Crostini di Fegatini, PASTA - Tagliatelli w/ Creamed Prosciutto Sauce, DESSERTS - Orange Cake/Rolled Florentine Wafer w/ whipped cream. P1,700

February 22 (Thursday) 10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. (classroom B) NEW CLASS! HOW TO OPEN A BUSINESS IN THE MALL by: Chef Vicki Villanueva. If you have an idea for a food cart, resto or specialty food store, this course will help you evaluate and develop your idea into real business. From concept to development and make marketing to controlling cost and making money, you will learn to navigate the pitfall of opening a business. (1) Finding a location, (2) Designing the business, (3) Selecting equipment and (4) Learn the requirements of the mall. P2,200

February 22 (Thursday) 1:30 - 5:00 p.m. (classroom B) NEW CLASS! SIZZLE YOUR WAY INTO BUSINESS (Opening a Steak house) by: Chef Vicki Villanueva. Recipes include: Porter house, Chicken Steak, Salisbury, Pork Steak, Gravy, Blue Marlin, Java Rice, Mashed Potato and Fettuccine Alfredo. P1,850

February 23 (Friday) 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) KOREAN COOKING I: A WORKSHOP by: Chef Cecile Park, owner of Sita Korean Restaurant & food consultant to various Korean restaurants in Metro Manila. "Beef Bulgogi (Tenderloin & ordinary), Chicken Bulgogi, Pork Bulgogi, Chap Chae, Mi Yuk Guk (Soups: Seaweeds, Beef or Tehong), Bibimbap & Kalbi Jim. P2,500

February 24 (Saturday) 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) HEIRLOOM RECIPES & SIGNATURE CATERING DISHES (PART I) by: Chef Sam de Leon. "Palabok, Wine-braised Mechado, Roasted Bined Pork Ribs w/ Asian-Style Barbecue Sauce, Layered Baked Macaroni w/ Anchovy Butter Toast, Rolyenong Manok, Mahi-Mahi w/ Sauce Tartar and Kluyen. P2,500

February 26 (Monday) 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) NEW CLASS! DIMSUMS 6 by: Chef Katherine Sion. "Cupao Wrapper, Cupao Fung, Salted Vegetables, Crispy Egg Tart, Fried Shrimp with Taro & Oyster Cake. P1,950

February 26 (Monday) 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (classroom B) ITALIAN PIZZA WORKSHOP by: Henry Sison. Italian Pizza Dough, Tomato Sauce Base, White Sauce Base, Recipes: Pizza Margherita, Pizza alle Anchoglie, Pizza al Tonno, Pizza Verde, Pizza Bianca, Pizza Fruiti di Mare, Pizza A Quattro Formaggi. Demonstration w/ student participation. P1,700

February 27 (Tuesday) 9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. (classroom A) BEST OF THE BEST V: CHOCOLATE BARS by: Chef Vicki Villanueva. "Triple Chocolate Fudgy Brownies, Cappuccino Bars, Turtle Squares, Zebra Bars, Butterscotch Bars and Revel Bars. P1,700

February 27 (Tuesday) 1:30 - 5:00 p.m. (classroom A) BEST OF THE BEST VI: FRUIT & NUTTY BARS by: Chef Vicki Villanueva. "Lemon Squares, Prune and Walnut Bars, Food for the Gods, Apple Bars, Mango Bars and Guapple Bars. P1,700

February 27 (Tuesday) 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (classroom B) NEW CLASS! HEIRLOOM RECIPES & SIGNATURE CATERING DISHES (PART II) by: Chef Sam de Leon. Inherited recipes, secrets and signature catering dishes cooking demonstration with student participation. "Kare-Kare, Beef Kaldereta, Targue Steak, Lengua w/ Sauce Robert, Chicken Barbecue and Tropical Fruit Salad. P2,700

February 28 (Wednesday) 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) GUILT-FREE SWEET TEMPTATIONS by: Chef Juan Carlo Estagile. Let Carlo show the tricks of giving in to those tempting sweets yet avoiding the fat and the carbs. Recipes include various kinds of Fat-free Yogurt Cheesecake with Fat-free crust, Fat-free Vodka Cake, Apple-Banana Bread Pudding, and Fat-free Carrot Cake. He will also show you how to whip up a totally fat-free, sugar free whipping topping from scratch. P1,500

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IT IS SAID THAT THE PAST MAY come back to haunt you. Well, it did on a trip to Cagayan de Oro last year, though not in the horrific way you may imagine.

While waiting to judge the next round of the culinary competition called Kumbira, an usher said a former student wanted to talk to me. And there she was, her face so familiar even if I could not recall her name at that moment. When she mentioned it, of course, I remembered.

Next day, she brought some more classmates, whose freshmen faces I used to look at each morning during the one year I taught at Xavier University.

All have children, some even have grandchildren. Some are engaged in business or have climbed way up the corporate ladder.

We lunched at Bigby's, a restaurant set up by a couple, young entrepreneurs who are constant competitors (and winners) at the culinary contest. We moved to another venue owned by a young chef who trained abroad and who specialized in pastries and cakes.

All around, there were several eating places, some just being constructed.

The way it was

They are a far cry from the few restaurants that were there during my teaching year. I went out with a group of seniors (I myself had just graduated then) some evenings.

We frequented this pizza place and the owner knew when my friends' allowances came and when I was paid my salary. We would order whole pizzas and the laughter in the place was decibels higher. Compare that to just one slice each and the subdued conversation during lean days and you



HARVESTING tilapia in Lake Sebu

get the difference.

I learned to take salad with my lunch in Cagayan de Oro. At the time, iceberg lettuce was difficult to get in Manila, but the farms were already growing greens in the cool climate of Bukidnon.

At last year's Kumbira, growers met with the chef-judges from Manila to find out how they could market their goods during the stormy months when Baguio and Tagaytay couldn't supply Manila restaurants.

Bukidnon is still a beautiful plateau of grazing lands. The Del Monte pineapple plantation that was, and still is, a too exclusive place is located here. My friends and I plotted to go there during the harvest season because we were told that after the choice pineapples were picked, anyone could get as much of the fruit that were left in the field.

Being culinary ignoramuses then, the thought of eating all that pineapple scratched that adventure from our must-do list.

Marawi was a must-visit place even then, an adventure certainly because it was the height of the Muslim separatist movement. And yet we rode a Xavier University bus into Muslim territory. The mayor sought to reassure us by saying, "When you are in

Marawi you are safe." Not welcome, just safe.

A taste of 'marang'

I don't remember what we ate at the Mindanao State University canteen but it was there that I had my first taste of marang, the aromatic fruit that looks like a smaller version of the jackfruit.

Because I was already in Mindanao, plans were made to visit other places there. We thought of going to Davao City by car. There was a chance to go to the Dole plantation in South Cotabato because a first cousin was married to the president.

Both involved complicated planning and the lack of good roads at the time wasn't encouraging. But I think the plans were scratched because, by then, I was terribly homesick.

Mindanao was not really a strange place during that teaching stint. I had been there before during one college vacation. My sisters and I traveled to this southern island on an interisland boat.

On that trip I dared to taste my first durian in Davao City and, on board a Japanese ship loading cut logs, I tasted the best sukiyaki.

After that teaching stint, it would

MINDANAO/C3

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ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Emmie G. Velarde

sms feedback: inquirer ent name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 283 (Smart) or email us at pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph

Piolo and Sam laugh off twosome rumors

A.S.A.P. LIVE PRESENTS "HEARTthrobs" on Feb. 2 and 3 at the Music Museum, featuring two of the most sought-after "Papas"—Piolo Pascual and Sam Milby.

Piolo and Sam just laugh off nasty rumors linking them to each other.

The woman now closest to Piolo's heart is his mom. "Last Valentine's Day, I hired a chef to cook dinner for me and my Mom at a rooftop." And Rica Peralejo? "I've stopped pursuing her. We both realized we're better off as friends."

So all work and no love? "I know in time when God sends the one I can spend the rest of my life with, I will choose love over career."

Sam just moved to his new house but the irony is, he's hardly home. "I don't have time for myself or for love. But of course, I dream of coming home to someone someday."

How delightfully strange it is that their hearts don't beat for a special someone right now. But they make hearts flutter wherever they go.

Maybe it's just their calling to be "Papable" material. You're possessed by their charms but you can never possess them.

From a distance

KC Concepcion flew back to Paris last Sunday. She and Lino Cayetano were together during her last few days here. Would their budding romance stand the test of time and distance? Is it going to be *loin des yeux, loin du coeur* (out of sight, out of mind)?

Or is it more like when she is out of sight, he will be out of his mind? Is Lino going to do a Tom Cruise and propose to KC in La Tour Eiffel?

Ooh la la! C'est l'amour!

'Flor' recall

John Estrada is looking forward to playing the role of Colonel Gary Alvarado in ABS-CBN's "Maria Flordeluna." Based on the hit '70s radio series, "Flordeluna" used to star John's ex-wife Janice de Belen in '80s the TV ver-

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

sion.

He recalls, "I grew up watching 'Flordeluna' because back in Basilan, 9 was the only channel we had. I never thought I'd end up marrying Flor, este, Janice."

Marriage over. So is his relationship with Vanessa del Bianco. "It will be a sad Valentine for

me but I have my kids and barkada to keep me company."

He swears there's nothing going on between him and Mylene Dizon. "I want to enjoy being single for a while. But I'm not on the prowl." Looking around but not searching, huh, John? Just like other singles out there, John has learned that loneliness eventually feels like something called freedom.

Guess who

The organizer of a corporate

event got so irked with this actor/TV host who mispronounced most of the terms and names in his spiel. During the rehearsal, he did okay. But when it was already show time, he bungled his lines.

The big boss minced no words and told his staff, "Next time, don't get an addict to host our program!" Mr. Actor/host really seemed so spaced-out. He'd better shape up lest there will be no more space for him in the limelight.



PIOLO/D4 HEARTTHROBS Sam Milby and Piolo Pascual

MYROR 15 ALL AGES ARE ADMITTED

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"In just after a week of usage twice a day, I noticed the dark blotches started to lighten."

Flordeliza Pamplona, a 48-year old housewife, Pynocare user for 1 year and 3 months, Manila



"The changes I have seen on my face have convinced me to continue using Pynocare."

Rossana Ocampo, a 46-year old housewife, Pynocare user for 1 year and 4 months, Baguio



"I am using Pynocare. I am satisfied with the lightening and reduction."

Joyce Fukuda, 44-year old golfer, Pynocare user for 11 months, Pampanga



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Bernadette Suarez, 47-year old Sales Agent, Pynocare user for 10 months, Cebu City



"Since I started using Pynocare, I've noticed my cheeks have cleared up considerably."

Adela Pasicolon, a 34-year old Assistant Bank Manager, Pynocare user for 10 months, Davao City

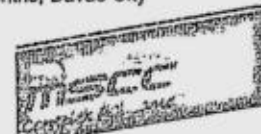
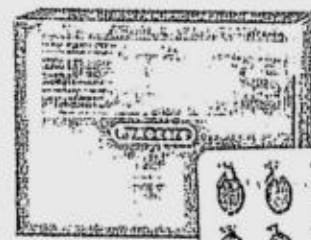
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MOVIE GUIDE

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100th ERAGON		Masagana Cinema (Pasig) tel 833-3270 / 833-3274 1 AGENT X 44 2 DEJA VU 3 SAW	
200th SAW 3		Center Mall Cinema Baguio Center Mall, Magway Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074) (448)446 1 ERAGON 2 DEJA VU	
300th BLOOD DIAMOND		Jade Cinema (Angeles City) tel (045) 887-5001 to 03 1 DEJA VU 2 AGENT X 44 3 SAW 4 ERAGON	
400th DEJA VU		Centre Plaza Cinema (Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237-7007 1 MANO PO 5 2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO	
500th ARTHUR AND THE INVISIBLES		Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati Waltermart Center, China Road Ave. cor. Antonio Arzoz Pda del Pilar, Makati City Tel 816-4214 / 816-4216 1 ERAGON 2 DEJA VU 3 AGENT X 44 4 ARTHUR & INVISIBLES	
600th ARTHUR & INVISIBLES		st mall (Mandaluyong) tel. 728-8150 1 AGENT X 44 2 DEJA VU 3 ERAGON 4 RESERVED	
700th ERAGON		metropolis (Alabang) tel. 880-2855, 543-3944 1 AGENT X 44 2 DEJA VU 3 ERAGON 4 SAW	
800th ERAGON		Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Calamba) tel (049) 545-7383 1 ERAGON 2 DEJA VU 3 AGENT X 44	
900th AGENT X 44		Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall (Binang) tel. (049) 411-146 1 RESERVED 2 RESERVED 3 RESERVED 4 RESERVED	
1000th AGENT X 44		Cinema 2000 Cinemagix (Urdaneta) tel (075) 548-6771 1 DEJA VU 2 AGENT X 44 3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO	
1100th AGENT X 44		Cinema 2000 Metrotown (Tarlac) tel (045) 982-1729 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO AGENT X 44 ERAGON	
1200th AGENT X 44		Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Pamplona) tel (044) 795-3320 1 DEJA VU 2 ERAGON/KASAL KASALI KASALO 3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO	
1300th AGENT X 44		Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Gapan) tel. (044) 486-7736 1 AGENT X 44 2 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL-B	
1400th KASAL KASALI KASALO		Lianas Cinema (Pasig) tel 646-4748 1 ROB-B-HOOD 2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3	
1500th KASAL KASALI KASALO		Lianas Cinema (Alabang) tel 850-1276 1 ERAGON 2 PURI 3 SABIK SA HALIK 4 ROB-B-HOOD	
1600th KASAL KASALI KASALO		Lianas MovieCity (Calamba) tel (049) 545-7202 1 DEJA VU 2 BABASAGIN CRYSTAL 3 ROB-B-HOOD 4 AGENT X 44 5 ERAGON	
1700th AGENT X 44		Fiesta World Mall (Lipa) tel. (043) 981-0790 1 SPIRIT TRAP 2 ERAGON 3 AGENT X 44 4 DEJA VU	
1800th AGENT X 44		Berina Cinema (Baciran) tel 879-2630 / 879-2029 1 ARTHUR & INVISIBLE 2 ROB-B-HOOD	
1900th AGENT X 44		MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE	

movietime

SHOWTIME

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EVERYTHING COMES TO LIFE

NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

Ben Stiller is Larry Daley, a good-hearted man who thinks that he's destined for something big. But he never imagined a job that "big" when he takes a menial job as a graveyard shift security guard at a museum of natural history.

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movietime

SHOWTIME

Your life as a movie

Featured Movie

ERAGON

Based from the best-selling novel by Christopher Paolini, this epic fantasy-adventure center on a young man named Eragon, whose destiny is revealed with the help of a dragon named Saphira. Eragon, now a Dragon Rider, is swept into a world of magic and wonder, discovering that he alone has the power to save or destroy an Empire.

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POWER PLANT CINEMA

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ARTHUR AND THE INVISIBLES 1:25, 3:40, 5:55, 8:10	ERAGON 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 9:50	BLOOD DIAMOND R13 1:25, 4:25, 7:25, 10:25
AGENT X44 PG13 1:20, 3:30, 5:40, 7:50, 10:00	SAW III R18 1:50, 4:00, 6:10, 8:20	DEJA VU PG13 12:10, 2:45, 5:20, 7:55, 10:30

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 MATINEE PHP 115.00 - FREE SEATING - SCREENINGS BEFORE 5:00 PM MONDAY-FRIDAY

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THEATRE-MALL

NOW SHOWING

ERAGON GP	BLOOD DIAMOND R-13
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PROMENADE

NOW SHOWING

SAW 3 R-18	ARTHUR & THE INVISIBLES GP	DEJA VU PG-13
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TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR CINEMA INQUIRIES CALL 722-4496

MUSIC MUSEUM Jan 23, 2007 Feb 02 & 03, 2007 Feb 7 & 8, 2007 Feb 19 & 20, 2007	Manasse Sanchez Piolo Pascual and Sam Milby Agot Isidro "Back to Basics" Rina Reyes	8:30 PM 8:30 PM 8:30 PM 8:00 PM
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EVERY MONDAY JAN. 10, 23, 30, 2007 JAN. 24, 2007	DANCE NIGHT DYORDS KO PO "PAKINERS" 9 Ball Celebrity Challenge	7:00 PM 8:30 PM 6:00 PM
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DEJAVU

Dejavu is thought to be a trick of the mind... but what if it's not?

FROM THE PRODUCER OF "PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN" AND THE DIRECTOR OF "ENEMY OF THE STATE"

THUNDERSTONE PICTURES AND JERRY BRUCKHEIMER FILMS PRESENT A SCOTT FREE PRODUCTION A FILM BY TONY SCOTT DENZEL WASHINGTON "DEJAVU" VIN CLIMER PAULA PATTON BRUCE GILLEYWOOD ADAM COLEBORN AND JANA CURELL MUSIC BY ROB HADAMAN COSTUME DESIGNER HARRY BRIDSON EDITOR GLENN LAMBLING PRODUCTION DESIGNER CHRIS LEBRON EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS JAMES PAUL CASHMAN AND MICHAEL STEVENSON PRODUCED BY CHAD DAMIAN TERRY ROSSO AND TONY SCOTT WRITTEN BY JERRY BRUCKHEIMER DIRECTED BY TONY SCOTT

Distributed by Buena Vista International thru Columbia Pictures

THURSDAY,
JANUARY 18, 2007

ENTERTAINMENT

Partying with bands
Freestyle, Spirit of '67

A NIGHT OF NON-stop partying with Freestyle happens tomorrow at Aruba, T. Morato, Quezon City. Freestyle is expected to deliver its unique brand of music—a mixture of R&B-soul and pop.

The band features the fresh talents of Mike Luis (ex Brand New Funk, Next Level), Joshua Desiderio (ex Kindred Garden, Art & Soul) and Rommel de la Cruz (ex Barbie's Cradle), along with original members Gerald Banzon (drums), Nikkii Cabardo (keyboards), Tat Suzara (guitar) and Jinky Vidal (vocals).

The event is a featured performance of the Winston in Concert 2007 Tour.

Upcoming events include a Parolcya ni Edgar concert at Pier 16 Bar and Restaurant, Iloilo City on Jan. 26.

Wednesdays

The Bellevue Hotel gathers partygoers every Wednesday for the Spirit of '67's weekly gig.

The hotel's 20/20 Entertainment Bar becomes a music and dance arena as the live act performs tunes from the '60s to the present.

Show starts at 9 p.m. Call 771-8181.

Tomorrow

RJ 'n Friends with Moonstrucks at RJTV Bar, Jupiter St., Makati

January 21

Kim Chui at Star-mall Edsa; 4 p.m.

January 22 and 23

Jojo A at RJTV Bar, Jupiter St., Makati

January 24

The Spirit of '67 at The Bellevue Hotel in Alabang; 9 p.m.

Jojo A with Mid-night Connection at RJTV Bar, Jupiter St., Makati

January 26

RJ 'n Friends with Moonstrucks at RJTV Bar, Jupiter St., Makati

January 27

Erik Santos at SM Sta. Rosa Laguna

January 28

Mojofly at Metropolis Star Alabang; 4 p.m.

January 29 and 30

Jojo A at RJTV Bar, Jupiter St., Makati

January 31

The Spirit of '67 at The Bellevue Hotel in Alabang; 9 p.m.

Jojo A with Mid-night Connection at RJTV Bar, Jupiter St., Makati

February 2 and 3

Piolo Pascual and Sam Milby in "A.S.A.P. Live Presents...Heart-throbs" at the Music Museum with guest Ai Ai de las Alas

February 7 and 8

Agot Isidro in "Back to Basics" at the Music Museum

February 10

Erik Santos, Rufa Mae Quinto, Verni Varga and Rico J. Puno at the Crowne Plaza Hotel

February 13

"Love to Laugh" with Ai Ai de las Alas and Ogie Alcasid at the Music Museum

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ARTHUR & THE INVISIBLES

1:05, 3:35, 6:05, 8:35, 11:00

G

ERAGON

1:05, 3:35, 6:05, 8:35, 11:00

G

DEJA VU

2:45, 5:35, 8:25, 11:05

PG-13

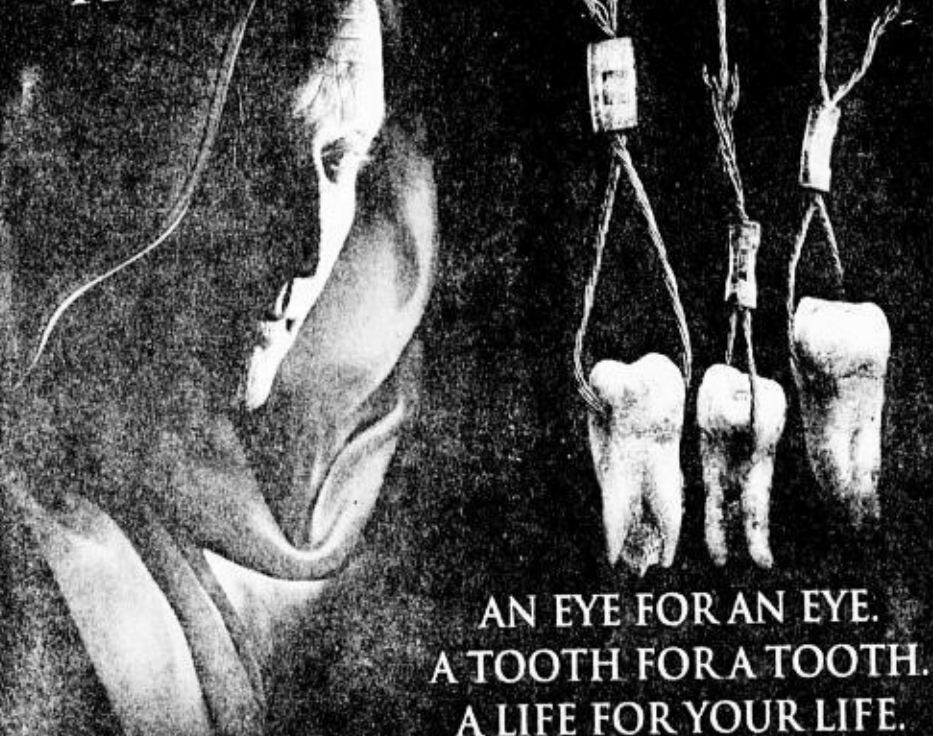
SAW 3

1:20, 3:45, 6:10, 8:35, 11:00

R-18

SHOW
TIME

R18 STRICTLY FOR ADULTS ONLY
**THE HIGHEST GROSSING
HORROR TRILOGY EVER!**



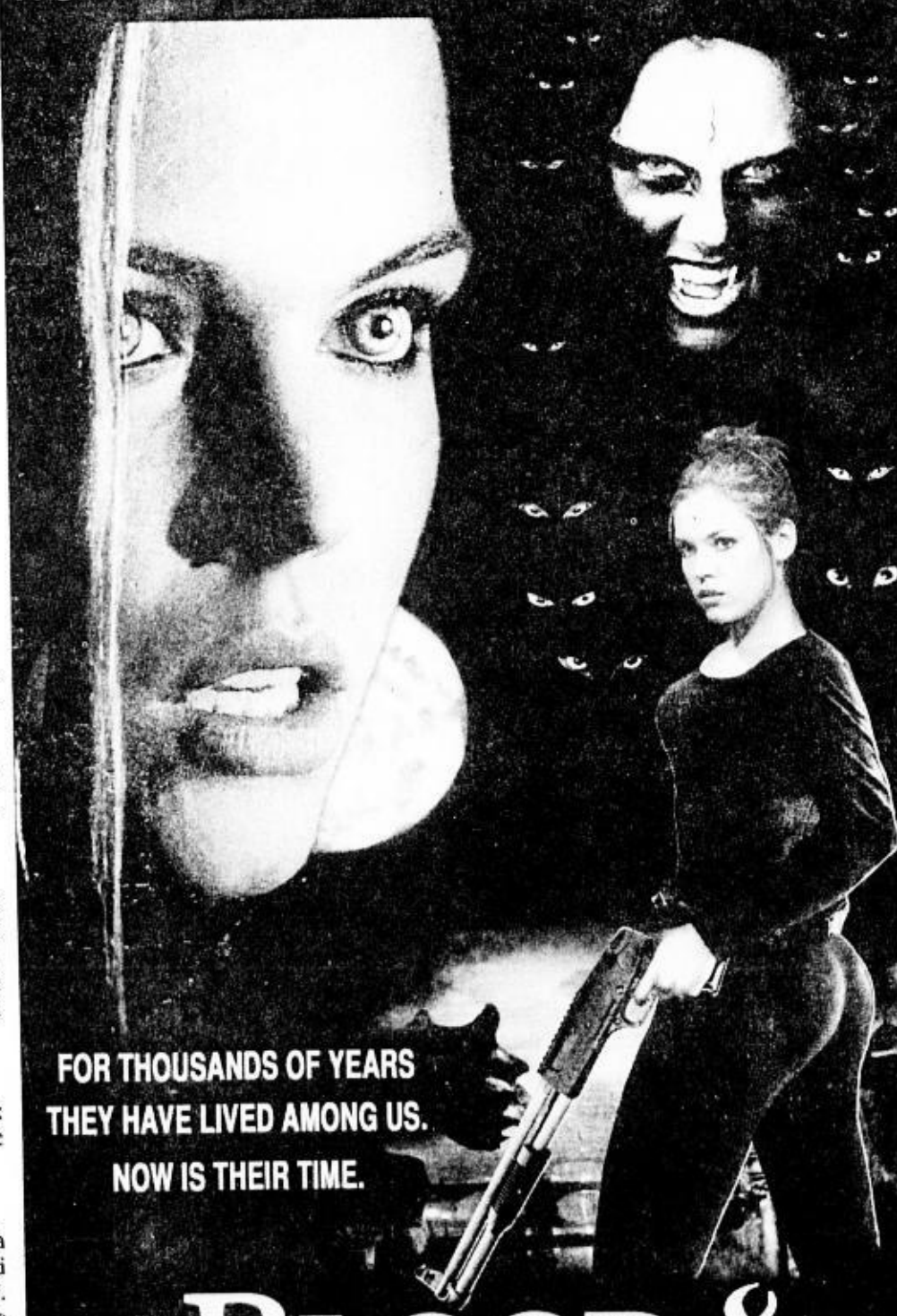
AN EYE FOR AN EYE.
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SAW III

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OPENS Jan. 24

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1 ERAGON • THX

6 BLOOD DIAMOND

2 DEJA VU

7 GRIFFIN and PHOENIX

3 SAW 3

8 ROB-B-HOOD

4 ARTHUR and the INVISIBLES

9 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

5 AGENT X44

10 INDIE SINE FESTIVAL

ERMITA

1 DEJA VU

2 ROB-B-HOOD
BLOOD DIAMOND

5 AGENT X44

3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

6 SAW 3

4 ARTHUR and the INVISIBLES

7 ERAGON

METRO EAST

1 ERAGON

5 DEJA VU

2 ARTHUR and the INVISIBLES

6 SAW 3

3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

7 ROB-B-HOOD

4 BLOOD DIAMOND

8 AGENT X44

NOVALICHES

1 DEJA VU
2 ERAGON
3 AGENT X445 SAW 3
6 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
7 ROB-B-HOOD

PIONEER

1 AGENT X44

3 SAW 3

2 DEJA VU

4 ARTHUR and the INVISIBLES

SHOWING TODAY!

BAGONG AGOS FILM FESTIVAL

2007 January 16 to 24



ALSO SHOWING TODAY!

S-EXPRESS SHORT FILM!

at 11 AM!

ROOMBOY

by Aloy Molon at 1:30 PM!

SARONGBANGGI

by Emman Dela Cruz at 4 PM!

PUSANG GALA

by Ellen Ongekeko-Marfil at 6:30 PM!

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STA. ROSA

1 AGENT X44
2 DEJA VU
3 ERAGON
4 SAW 3 / KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
5 A GOOD YEAR

LIPA

1 AGENT X44
2 DEJA VU
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 ERAGON / BLOOD DIAMOND
5 ROB-B-HOOD

DASMARINAS

1 AGENT X44
2 DEJA VU
3 BLOOD DIAMOND
4 SAW 3

ANGELES

1 AGENT X44
2 DEJA VU
3 SAW 3
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

IMUS

1 ERAGON
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 AGENT X44
4 ROB-B-HOOD
5 DEJA VU
6 SAW 3

STARMILLS

1 ERAGON
2 AGENT X44
3 DEJA VU
4 SAW 3
5 ROB-B-HOOD
6 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

BACOLOD

1 AGENT X44
2 DEJA VU
3 ERAGON
4 KAMASUTRA
5 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
6 DECK THE HALLS

ILOILO

1 AGENT X44
2 DEJA VU
3 DECK THE HALLS
4 ERAGON
5 TENACIOUS D
6 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO



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3 GOLDEN GLOBE NOMINATIONS
BEST PICTURE
 BEST ACTRESS BEST SCREENPLAY

SAN FRANCISCO
 FILM CRITICS CIRCLE
 WINNER

BEST PICTURE
 BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR BEST SCREENPLAY

Temptation
 Perversion
 Deception

Little Children

Kate Winslet Jennifer Connelly Patrick Wilson



OPENS JAN. 24

D1

ENTERTAINMENT

THURSDAY,
 JANUARY 18, 2007

Piolo and Sam laugh off ...

From page D1

Kiss flicks

This week, the StarStruck Survivors tackle their first acting test as they star in their very own kiss flicks, directed by Rico Gutierrez, with an acting workshop from multi-awarded actress Gina Alajar.

Today, Dex Quindoza of Manila and Rich Asuncion of Bohol get to kiss each other in the action flick "Takas" while Friday's "Bestpren" is a fantasy flick starring Prince Stefan of Iloilo and Stef Prescott of La Union. The musical "Dude," airs on Saturday with Aljur Abrenica of Pampanga and Kris Bernal of Quezon City.

Who will kiss stardom goodbye as the search gets more torrid?

New gear

Flitpines.net, the No. 1 download site of Digital Pinoy Music, ushers in 2007 with its promo "New Year, New Gear." Every \$2 or P100 worth of music download purchase from the site during the promo period equals a raffle ticket. At stake in the grand draw on March 19 is a high-tech Yamaha Home Theater system.

Happy EARS for the new year!

Write on

Hats off and bottoms up to the efficient officers of Afima (Alyansa ng Filipinong Mamamahayag) Palawan Chapter who will have their induction on Jan. 20 at Asturias Hotel, Puerto Prinsesa. Write/Right on! You are all an affirmation of Afima's noble ideals.

E-mail wateringhole-shangrila@yahoo.com.

SHANG CINEPLEX

1 ERAGON MTRCB GP 1.00, 3.15, 5.30, 7.45, 10.00	3 BLOOD DIAMOND MTRCB R-13 1.00, 4.00, 7.00, 10.00
2 SAW 3 MTRCB R-18 12.10, 2.30, 4.50, 7.10, 9.30	4 DEJA VU MTRCB PG-13 2.00, 4.40, 7.20, 10.00

PREMIERE THEATRE ARTHUR AND THE INVINCIBLES
 (SUBJECT TO MTRCB RATING) 12.00, 2.30, 5.00, 7.30, 10.00

Movies and schedules are subject to change without prior notice

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6th floor, Shangri-La Plaza Mall
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 Call 633-7851, loc. 171/170 or 633-2227 for more details.

Shangri-La Plaza

ARANETA CENTER

Gateway Cineplex*10

AGENT X-44 1:00 / 3:10 / 5:20 / 7:30 / 9:40	SAW 3 12:30 / 2:50 / 5:10 / 7:30 / 9:50	DEJAVU 1:40 / 4:20 / 7:00 / 9:50
ARTHUR & THE INVINCIBLES 1:45 / 4:20 / 6:55 / 9:30	ROB-B-HOOD 1:10 / 4:00 / 6:50 / 9:40	GRIFFIN & PHOENIX 2:10 / 4:40 / 7:10 / 9:40
ERAGON 12:20 / 2:40 / 5:00 / 7:20 / 9:50	KASAL, KASALI, KASALO 1:00 / 3:10 / 5:20 / 7:30 / 9:40	THE BLOOD DIAMOND 1:05 / 4:00 / 6:55 / 9:50
DEJAVU 1:00 / 3:40 / 6:20 / 9:00		

MIMALL 5

AGENT X-44 11:55 / 2:05 / 4:15 / 6:25 / 8:35	SAW 3 12:00 / 1:20 / 3:40 / 6:00 / 8:20	DEJAVU 12:00 / 2:40 / 5:20 / 8:00
KASAL, KASALI, KASALO 11:55 / 2:05 / 4:15 / 6:25 / 8:35	ARTHUR & THE INVINCIBLES 12:00 / 3:35 / 6:10 / 8:45	

For ticket inquiries, please call TicketNet at 911-5555 or log on to www.ticketnet.com.ph

ARANETA COLISEUM

2007 WORLD SLASHER CUP
 INVITATIONAL 8-COCK DERBY
 Jan. 18, Thur Semi-Finals & Jan. 20, Sat - Championship

LOVING ARA
 February 3, Saturday 8 pm

glorietta **ALABANG TOWN CENTER** **AYALA CENTER CEBU** **MARKET! MARKET!** **Ayala Malls**

AT THE CINEMAS

Reserve your tickets by texting SURESEATS G3 or SURESEATS G4 to 2333 (Globe) or 211 (Smart) or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations
 Movie schedules may change without prior notice. For verification, please call 729 7777

G1 GLORIETTA 1	1 SAW 3	2 DEJA VU	3 ROB-B-HOOD	4 AGENT X44
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 BLOOD DIAMOND	2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO	3 DEJA VU	GUARANTEED SEATS
	4 INNOCENT VOICES	5 ARTHUR & THE INVINCIBLES	6 ERAGON	7 SAW 3
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 SAW 3	2 DEJA VU		
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 ERAGON	2 DEJA VU	GUARANTEED SEATS	
	3 INNOCENT VOICES	4 SAW 3	5 BLOOD DIAMOND	GUARANTEED SEATS
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 DEJA VU	2 ERAGON	GUARANTEED SEATS	
	3 SAW 3	4 AGENT X44	5 ARTHUR & THE INVINCIBLES	
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 DEJA VU	2 SAW 3	3 A GOOD YEAR	4 AGENT X44
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1 AGENT X44	2 DEJA VU		
	3 SAW 3	4 ARTHUR & THE INVINCIBLES	5 KASAL KASALI KASALO	

At the Activity Center

Customer Service text hotline: 0917 6095900
 Customer Service Numbers: Glorietta - 752 7272; from 10am to 9pm
 Greenbelt - 757 4853; from 11am to 9pm

GLORIETTA Honda Car Exhibit January 19 to 23, 2007	ALABANG TOWN CENTER Power Rangers Space Patrol Delta (SPD) Meet & Greet Event January 21, 2007
AYALA CENTER CEBU Live Remote Broadcast of Miss Cebu Coronation Night January 18, 2007	MARKET! MARKET! Nestle Breakfast Cereals Event January 6 to 7, 2007

GREENBELT ETC! E! News Daily Launch!
 January 19, 2007

Onstage! Repertory Philippines presents: MOOSE MURDERS
 at REP's Globe Theater - January 12 to 28, 2007
 For inquiries, pls. call 887-0719

Ayala MUSEUM Zero-In: 5 Convergence Black Bouquet: Juvenal Sanso Prints
 Until March 11, 2007
 For inquiries, please call 757-7117 to 21 or visit www.ayalamuseum.org

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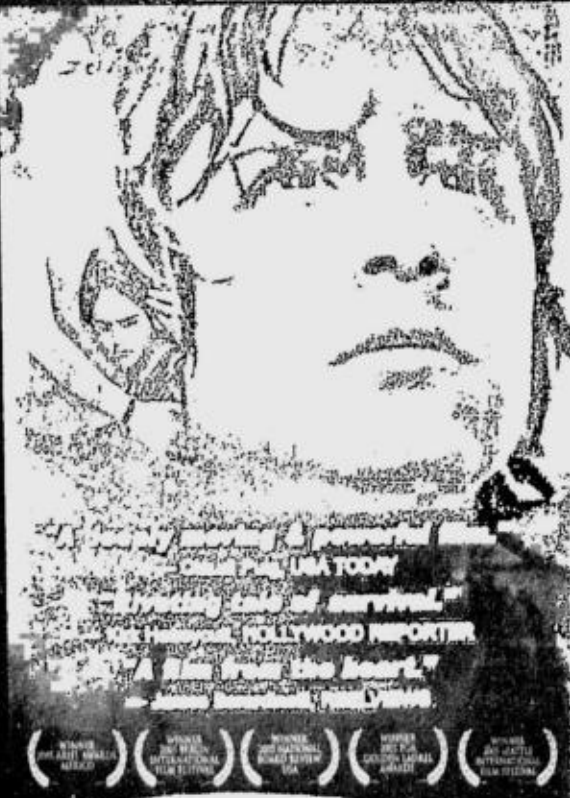
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WIN'EMALL

Promo Period: November 15, 2006 to January 31, 2007

Call 88-100 for inquiries

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INNOCENT VOICES

War is hell.
 Just ask the boy who's about to turn twelve.



MTRCB Rating: Parental Guidance 13